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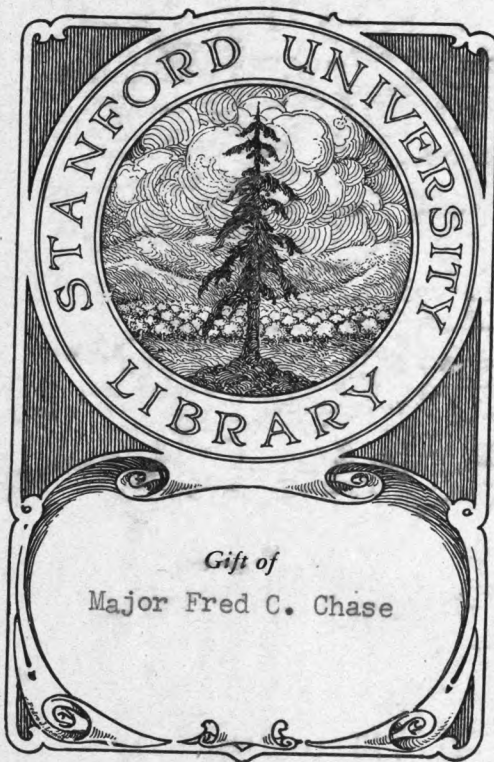
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SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

AND

GIOTTO
HIS INTERPRETER

BY

JAMES ROUNSEVILLE CHAPMAN
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1916

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To
H. F. C.

FOREWORD

It has been said of Goethe that he always loved to get his first view of a city from some tower or hilltop. Goethe was not an infallible guide, for he journeyed many miles to see the Temple of Minerva at Assisi, but passed by with indifference the great Church of San Francesco, so strong were his prejudices. Yet we may safely follow his example in desiring bird's-eye views. Can those who have seen, ever forget Rome from her surrounding hills, Milan from the Cathedral roof, Paris from the Trocadero, the Bay of Naples from Sorrento or Amalfi, the Valley of the Loire from Chaumont terrace, the Umbrian plain from Perugia, the Alps from the summit of Gorner Grat, or perhaps our own little New England city nearly hidden by the elm trees, from the top of some near-by mountain?

Many cities offer such opportunities, none perhaps, a more satisfying one than Florence. Arriving there in the afternoon after the long railway journey from Rome, when the day is too far spent for sight-seeing, one can find no diversion more agreeable than a drive to San Miniato to see the sunset.

The way thither leads through the narrow crowded streets. We cross Ponte Vecchio, proceeding to the suburbs, then up a long steep highway, shaded on either side by rows of poplar and cypress trees. It is interesting to recall that we are upon historic ground for San Miniato heights was chosen as the

place of defense for the city during the wars in which it became involved in the early part of the sixteenth century. To Michel Angelo was given the task of constructing the fortifications, crumbling fragments of which still remain. The old tower near the top of the hill sheltered the two cannon, the only artillery of the Florentines.

On the summit is the church of San Miniato with its extensive grounds. It is a quaint old building, Tuscan-Romanesque in style. The façade is encrusted with marble of many colors, while over the entrance in rich mosaics is a figure of the saint for whom the church was named, one of the Madonna and one of the Christ for whom he gave his life in martyrdom. The façade is surmounted by the rather strange adornment of a huge eagle, the emblem of one of the religious orders.

Entering the church one seems to step at once into medieval surroundings. The twelve stone columns, each with a different capital, were undoubtedly transported from far-away pagan temples where they had borne their heavy burdens for many centuries. Under our feet are the smoothly worn tombstones of the dead of long ago, while above our heads are faded frescoes mingled with the ancient and more enduring mosaics. The carved choir screen of colored marble and the marble pulpit are beautiful to look upon, while the half gloomy interior is faintly lighted by soft yellow rays streaming through the alabaster windows.

Stepping without the church one involuntarily expands the lungs, draws in a deep draught of the purer air, and opens the eyes wider to greet the more extended vision. The *piazza* is well protected

by a stone parapet over which we look far down upon one of the fairest cities in the world. The placid Arno, crossed by many picturesque bridges, flows through the center; we locate familiar buildings, the Cathedral group, the Palazzo Vecchio, Santa Croce and the Pitti Palace. Over the tree-tops is the setting sun, which shining through the hazy atmosphere, envelops the whole city in a golden mist, and we wonder if ever we shall see a more beautiful sight.

Two structures stand out with great prominence in this picture, the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce and Giotto's Campanile.

Florence has associations rich enough to bewilder the traveler. For personal reasons the association of St. Francis of Assisi and Giotto have brought me peculiar joy and satisfaction. Each diffused much light in his day, one to the spirit, the other to the imagination, at a time when spirit and imagination were at low ebb, and although they lived a generation apart, their names will always be linked together.

It is quite possible that Giotto's parents were members of the Third Franciscan Order, and that the boy at an early age was taught the story of the life of the saint, for when he began to paint, his frescoes revealed a most intimate knowledge of the subject. Moreover Italy was still under the influence of the reformation brought about by St. Francis and St. Dominic, and all the legends and traditions, as well as the facts connected with their lives were cherished and oft repeated by their followers. When Giotto began with his new art of story-telling, decorating the walls of churches with scenes from the life of St. Francis, he instantly

sprang into a popularity unsurpassed by any artist of his day.

We do not know whether he possessed a religious nature, or whether his business acumen led him to develop his particular style of painting. Indeed, it would be interesting to know to what extent, if any, the moral nature of an artist is reflected through his works. When we look upon a painting of the Madonna, we feel that the conception must have originated in a pure mind, yet as the artist idealizes his subject, so we idealize the artist, forgetting that after all, art is a vocation for bread winning, and the sweat of toil may drop upon the canvas, as well as into the dust of the road or upon the leaf of the ledger.

Yet it is wholesome to think that as Giotto labored for many months over the frescoes, he must have absorbed much of the beauty and tenderness of St. Francis' life, and that possibly the saint became the inspiration of the artist, as the artist became the interpreter of the saint.

It was in 1903 that I saw for the first time, Giotto's frescoes in the church of Santa Croce. Ancient art has always had a strange fascination for me, and as I looked at the old and rare paintings, I experienced the same sensations as when listening to a symphony or a song.

The impressions received on that eventful morning of my first acquaintance with Giotto, were quickened in 1907 by visits to Assisi and Padua.

Months of study followed, and as my books accumulated and I read on, the association of St. Francis and Giotto began to take form in my mind as a fixed relationship.

So let us unite these two men in sympathetic bonds, and in doing this we are only availing ourselves of a privilege permitted every writer of medieval history.

This book has been a long time in the making. Some of the paragraphs written several years ago become more poignant in the light of the present European war, but fortunately the territory where the events took place has not yet been invaded nor the art treasures destroyed.

*Eastwood
Kenilworth, Illinois
December twenty-fifth
Nineteen hundred sixteen*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD	
I. WORLD CONDITIONS BEFORE THE RENAISSANCE	I
II. PERUGIA	29
III. ASSISI	63
IV. SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD	97
V. SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI	107
VI. FRANCISCAN LITERATURE	193
VII. GUBBIO	213
VIII. GIOTTO	229
IX. GIOTTO AT ASSISI	255
X. GIOTTO AT PADUA	285
XI. GIOTTO AT ROME AND FLORENCE	329

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
WORLD CONDITIONS	3
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
THE FOUNTAIN AT PERUGIA	31
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
CORSO VANNUCCI, PERUGIA	43
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
STREET SCENE ON MARKET DAY, PERUGIA	43
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
PALAZZO PUBBLICO, PERUGIA	47
<i>From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart</i>	
FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE— <i>Perugino</i>	53
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
PERUGIAN CATTLE	57
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI	65
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
ASSISI	71
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE PORTIUNCULA	75
<i>From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart</i>	
THE PORTIUNCULA	79
<i>From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart</i>	
THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI	85
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI	87
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
UPPER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI	89
<i>From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart</i>	
SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD	99
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	

	Page
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI	109
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
SAINT FRANCIS RENOUNCES HIS FATHER	119
<i>Fresco by Giotto in the Upper Church</i>	
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
CHURCH OF SAN DAMIANO, ASSISI	135
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
SAINT FRANCIS STANDING BEFORE HIS CELL	153
<i>From a painting by Bellini</i>	
<i>From a photograph by permission of the owner, Mr. Henry C. Frick</i>	
SAINT FRANCIS RECEIVES THE STIGMATA	161
<i>Fresco by Giotto in Santa Croce Church</i>	
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
FRANCISCAN LITERATURE	195
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
FEAST OF THE CERI—GUBBIO	215
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
GUBBIO AND MONTE CALVO	223
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
CIMABUE AND GIOTTO	231
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
MADONNA AND CHILD— <i>Cimabue</i>	237
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
MADONNA AND CHILD— <i>Giotto</i>	239
<i>Reproduction from a Brogi photograph</i>	
GIOTTO AT ASSISI	257
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
THE NATIVITY— <i>Giotto</i>	261
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE CRUCIFIXION— <i>Giotto</i>	263
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
ALLEGORY OF POVERTY— <i>Giotto</i>	267
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
ALLEGORY OF OBEDIENCE— <i>Giotto</i>	267
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
MARRIAGE OF SAINT FRANCIS AND LADY POVERTY	271
<i>By Sassetta. Reproduction from a Braun photograph</i>	

	Page
THE SERMON TO THE BIRDS— <i>Giotto</i>	277
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE EXPULSION OF THE DEVILS FROM AREZZO— <i>Giotto</i>	279
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
CHRISTMAS NIGHT AT GRECCIO— <i>Giotto</i>	283
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
STATUE OF GENERAL GATTAMELATA, PADUA	287
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
ARENA CHAPEL, PADUA	291
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	
INTERIOR OF ARENA CHAPEL SHOWING GIOTTO FRESCOS	293
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
JOACHIM RETIRES TO THE SHEEPFOLD— <i>Giotto</i>	307
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN— <i>Giotto</i>	309
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
WATCHING OF THE RODS— <i>Giotto</i>	313
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE VIRGIN MARY RETURNS TO HER HOME— <i>Giotto</i>	317
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE RAISING OF LAZARUS— <i>Giotto</i>	319
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS— <i>Giotto</i>	321
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE KISS OF JUDAS— <i>Giotto</i>	323
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
THE LAST SUPPER— <i>Giotto</i>	325
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
GIOTTO AT ROME AND FLORENCE	331
<i>Drawing by Ruth B. Steele</i>	
FUNERAL OF SAINT FRANCIS— <i>Giotto</i>	339
<i>Reproduction from a Brogi photograph</i>	
THE FEAST OF HEROD— <i>Giotto</i>	341
<i>From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari</i>	
GIOTTO'S TOWER, FLORENCE	345
<i>From a photograph by J. R. C.</i>	

**WORLD CONDITIONS PRECEDING
THE RENAISSANCE**



CHAPTER I

WORLD CONDITIONS PRECEDING THE RENAISSANCE

ONE of the most impressive of the frescoes by Michel Angelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is that of God creating the sun and moon. The august figure of Jehovah is represented floating on a cloud. With hands outstretched in forceful gesture and countenance intensified with creative energy, He evokes from the seething mass, which is "without form and void," two great balls of light, the one to shine by day, the other by night.

"Let there be light," was the first divine utterance; morning and evening, day and night, purely physical and material divisions; but man was on his way to his universe, and with his coming, the divine command was to put on a new significance, and gain a new meaning.

Man has taken the words from the lips of Deity, and with them graven on his banner, has marched down the centuries. "Light, more light," has been his battle-cry, and though his flag has often trailed in the dust and his voice been silenced by the hosts of darkness, he has ever emerged and pressed onward.

Many times the light has flickered, its tiny flame almost unseen against the shadowy background, but it has never gone out. There have been seasons full

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

of radiance, as in the glorious days of the Renaissance, when men dared to look into the face of the sun, and cry "Light, more light."

Never are we so impressed with the brevity of life as when we become seekers after knowledge. We scan the records of the years, showing that every decade adds its quota to the universal enlightenment, and become discouraged when we pause to think that there is so much to know and the time is so short.

Fortunately there have been and always will be men who love the pioneer work. Very few of us have the time or talent to dig among the rocks, or scrape the corroding dust from ancient walls and monuments, but we can delve among the bookshelves and make the discoveries our own.

"A talent for art is rare, but it is given to nearly every one to cultivate a taste for art." The study of it not only broadens the mind, but the student is led into a world of beauty, into a realm of imagination, where his better nature finds fullest development and most adequate expression. He also enters into an atmosphere of legendary and historical research which he finds it is impossible to elude.

Many histories of art have been written, and we can trace the progress from centuries before the Christian era to the present day. Art cannot be divorced from history, but the student, unless he has the power of concentration, will often find himself unconsciously giving his time and thought to

WORLD CONDITIONS

history, so strong is the temptation to follow the seductive lanes.

The great function of art is to re-present. How then can we stand before a picture and comprehend it, knowing nothing of the story it has to tell? If we knew not our Bible, Madonnas would be but portraits, and the crucifixion only the law's decree, but because we *do* know, the Madonna becomes the Virgin Mary, "blessed among women," and the crucifixion, the vicarious sacrifice.

If we knew nothing of the legends of the saints, we might stand unmoved before Sodoma's St. Sebastian, or Maderna's St. Cecilia, but because we do know our hearts are more deeply touched by the beautiful canvas and lovely statue.

It is not difficult to imagine the beginnings of art. Every man was his own architect in those first days, constructing his tent for shelter, his rude altar for worship, the rough hewn tomb for his burial place. As he progressed, the tent became a palace, the altar a temple, and the tomb a pyramid or a Pantheon.

The tombs of the Egyptians are doubtless the oldest monumental structures in existence. It has been said, "The whole world fears time, but time fears the pyramids." They have been silently standing there for four thousand years, and the mind is completely bewildered when it seeks to grasp the method of their construction.

We watch with pride the great modern building rising from the ground, its huge beams picked up by giant hands and quickly carried through space to

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

their allotted places in the structure, yet we know very little of the mechanical contrivances employed in the erection of the pyramids. Many years were consumed and thousands of the swarming population employed in the building of these marvelous tombs, containing but a single chamber for the repose of the body of a great monarch. How wonderfully they serve to represent the power and energy of the human mind and will.

There can be no doubt that the art of painting has existed in every period of time. It is most natural that man should be an imitator, and the effort to "make a picture" has been universal. Sooner or later, "the longing is awakened within him to give a visible form to what he dimly feels," and the walls of his home and temples of worship were the first to receive the touches of his genius; rude efforts they were to be sure, but very significant in the process of his evolution.

There still exist in Egypt in the tombs and temples, decorations of an age many centuries before the Christian era, and Roman and Greek ruins of a later period contain traces of an advancing art.

We might not have known the richness of color and grace of design of the first century mural paintings, had not Vesuvius preserved them by burying them deep in the ruins of Pompeii, keeping them tightly sealed from the change and decay of seventeen centuries. Recent excavations have unearthed houses richly decorated, and sections of walls have been removed to the Naples museum, upon which are painted graceful garlands of flowers,

WORLD CONDITIONS

tiny cherubs, Greek and Roman Gods and mythological scenes, while the beautiful tints assure us that the artists of that day knew the secrets of color.

Art apparently made more rapid progress in sculpture than in painting. Cut in imperishable stone, the beautiful forms survived the dainty representations on wall and ceiling, and Phidias and Praxiteles, the Greek sculptors working with the chisel five hundred years before Christ, are familiar names to every art lover.

Our knowledge of Grecian and Roman painting is limited, but we can assume that nations producing such wonders of architecture and sculpture, might have excelled in the art of painting. Fragments of frescoes and painted vases are all that remain for us to see and handle, and these were doubtless the work of artisans, rather than of the great artists of the day, yet they suggest to us that the style of the period was classic and heroic, and that the subjects were those dear to the hearts of the people, those world conquerors, who loved to look upon their deeds of heroism painted in glowing colors on the walls of their temples.

We read of Cleanthes, the originator of silhouettes; Telephanes, who developed the art of linear drawing; Ecphantus, who introduced monochrome, or painting in a single color; Eumarus, who distinguished man from woman by different colors; Polygnotus, who was summoned to Athens, 462 B. C., to decorate public buildings and excited the whole nation by his marvelous power; Zeuxis, who painted a bunch

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

of grapes so lifelike that the birds picked at them; and Parrhasius, who painted a curtain over this picture which deceived Zeuxis himself; Timanthes, noted for his imagination; and Apelles, for the harmony of proportion, who alone was permitted to paint the portrait of Alexander. These names arouse no emotion, they are literally "all Greek" to us; we have never seen their work, it disappeared ages ago; but they kept the art of painting alive, passing it on Greek to Roman, Roman to Early Christian, Early Christian to Byzantine, Byzantine to Modern.

The struggle for world power began about three hundred years B. C. Greece was subjugated by Rome 146 B. C., losing her identity as a nation. War and strife continued on every hand until the establishment of the Roman Empire B. C. 27. Then came a brief period of rest for fifty years under the rule of Augustus, a golden season for literature and doubtless for art. Following this, came years of intrigue, slavery and vice, but of ever increasing power under Nero and other emperors, until at the dawn of the second century, Rome, during the reign of Trajan, became the mistress of the civilized world.

The invasions of the northern barbarians began in the third century, and in the fourth, the Eastern or Byzantine empire was established, with Constantinople as its Capital. In the fifth century the Western empire fell before the Goths, Franks and Huns, and Rome was pillaged in 410 and again in 455.

WORLD CONDITIONS

The first five or six centuries of the Christian era might be called the Migratory period. Numerous tribes wandered up and down what is known to us as Europe, the stronger displacing the weaker and slowly absorbing them. Rome had been the only supreme and organized power, and when she collapsed, no other rose to take her place. Much of her civilization was appropriated by the barbarians and became the foundation of future empires, but the unit of strength was shattered forever. Then followed the long centuries of nation building, with Goth, Frank and Hun in the south, Saxon, Briton and Norman in the north, until out of all the chaos there emerged a new map of Europe, and England, France, Germany and Italy greeted the eye for the first time.

Each cycle had contributed something to its successor, and dark, uncouth and barbaric as were many of the periods of the Middle Ages, the continuity of civilization was unbroken.

Emperor Constantine had shown the genius of a statesman in establishing the new seat of empire at Byzantium, for when Rome fell, the eastern empire survived and speedily attracted to itself much of the strength and glory of Rome. Its boundaries were small, comprising only the territory occupied by modern Greece, Turkey and a portion of Asia Minor, and being far removed from the scenes of western upheavals, escaped much of the turmoil prevailing in that portion of the world. Occasionally the northern hordes would turn aside and invade its territory, and Persia proved to be a most petulant neighbor, but

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

its progress was unchecked, and its splendor undiminished for centuries.

In the sixth century, Justinian, the greatest of Byzantine rulers, by his energy and strength of will, instilled into the listless and half decadent nation a desire for world power, giving her an impetus on the march to civilization. But Byzantine characteristics and ideals were too evanescent for a sturdy world; they held sway for six hundred and fifty years, only to be crushed in 1204, by that vast, unruly and strangest of all movements, the Crusades.

One stands aghast before the process of the evolution of man as one sees him emerge from the dark ages. After such experiences, have any of the virtues survived which shall make him noble and great? Has the love of beauty been entirely submerged during this period of gloom and horror? These queries, and many more are answered as we watch him going forward into the thirteenth century, and we are constrained to believe that the light has never failed, and that the dark years may have been necessary for his fuller development.

We may wonder sometimes while thinking of the contributions to mankind of those long ago generations, what will be the gift to posterity of this twentieth century of commercialism.

But why this long digression from art to history? Are we making of our own advice a negation? No! not at all, for in the narration of these events, we are offering an apology for art, an excuse for art's sake, for how, think you, could art and beauty flourish in such an atmosphere?

WORLD CONDITIONS

Greed, lust, crime and power had so possessed men's minds and hearts, that there was little room for the beautiful, and in the wild excesses of conquest when cities were sacked and burned, the richest art gems of the world were dashed to earth and trampled under ruthless feet, buried for centuries under accumulations of ruins, and brought to the light of day again, mutilated and soil stained, by the thought and care of a finer day and generation.

Enter the great galleries of the Louvre or Vatican in this retrospective spirit, and you will have a veneration for the long rows of headless, armless and footless trunks. Think of the story Galatea might tell if only Pygmalion would pray again to Venus; think of the scenes which have been enacted in the presence of these silent on-lookers, and remember that you are standing in the midst of an art which our own age, or any other age has been unable to reproduce. "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

We have said that history and art cannot be divorced; so also religion and art are bound indissolubly together by ties which can never be broken.

"Art rests on a kind of religious sense, on a deep steadfast earnestness, and on this account it unites so readily with religion." Michel Angelo wrote, "Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavor to create something perfect, for God is perfection, and whoever strives for it, strives for something God-like." Art has found its richest expression in religious subjects, and in its turn, religion has told its story most effectively through

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the medium of art. Millions of souls have been stirred by the grandeur of majestic cathedrals, and thousands of men and women have made pilgrimages of many miles to kneel in adoration before some beautiful picture of the Madonna.

The Biblical narrative closed in the year 63 with the "Acts of the Apostles." The little band of followers of our Lord, we are told, after the ascension, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." Those days of ecstasy were succeeded by days of evangelization, and many accepted the Christian faith. Persecutions followed, bitter and intense in their hatred, and two years after the crucifixion, Stephen, the first martyr, gave up his life for the new religion.

The spread of Christianity through the Roman empire was met by vigorous persecutions under Nero, Marcus Aurelius, Decius and other emperors, but the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church, and after two hundred and fifty years, in the early part of the fourth century, Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity, and it became the religion of the state. But alas! a nation cannot be Christianized by the edict of its emperor. Christianity does not come in such a wholesale way to possess the hearts of men.

While it is true that under Constantine's protection persecution ceased, great churches were built and the new religion gained in numbers and in strength, it is

WORLD CONDITIONS

also true that the people at large did not accept its teachings; they were not ready to receive the gospel of love and self-sacrifice.

The condition of Roman morals at this time was deplorable, and Roman conscience was being enervated by the evils existing in public and private life. Nothing was sacred, everything being sacrificed for the love of pomp, the display of vanity and gratification of desire. The church was dominated by a few, being used largely for the furtherance of political ambitions. That Christianity should flourish in such an atmosphere was an impossibility, nevertheless the seed was sown.

With the advent of the barbarians, and the disruption of the western Roman empire, civilization received a crushing blow. One can scarcely give credence to the accounts of horror and destruction which have come down through the pages of history. There were those who tried to stem the tide, to bring peace out of the warfare and confusion, but their efforts were in vain. "We can do nothing in the world as it is; the only thing we can do is to get out of it;" so they fled from the cities and towns to the deserts and mountains, and out of this movement began the monastic life of central and southern Europe.

The first monks were the choice spirits of the age, men of the church, of contemplative mind, who could not endure the awful conditions which surrounded them during the days of the falling empire. As the years went by their numbers increased, their haunts became places of refuge for the oppressed,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and centers of charity and good deeds. The movement speedily became a religious one, and very popular, for it attracted thousands of souls who were sick of the world. Men of influence came, and men of wealth, and soon the adjacent hills were dotted with great monasteries.

The monastic idea is a very old one. The early monks claimed it from Christ himself, who often went apart into the desert to rest awhile or on the mountain top to pray. The original rules of the orders were strict, patterned after the teachings of Jesus, and must be perfectly obeyed by those who subscribed to them. That was well, but when penances were pronounced for disobedience, the door was opened wide for many abuses and in they flocked, and the evils of the system became manifest.

Much has been written against the monk and the monastery; they have had many defamers and few defenders. That man should turn his back upon life's battles and problems, leaving his brother man to fight it out, is an act which does not appeal to the chivalric spirit of these latter days. Doubtless the time is past for that sort of life, but in forming our conclusions, let us not forget the changed conditions which have come with the passing centuries.

Do you not think that Thomas Carlyle was a little severe when he wrote of the monks: "Those singular two-legged animals with their rosaries and breviaries, with their shaven crowns, hair cilices and vows of poverty, masquerade so strangely through our fancy, an extinct species of the human family." It

WORLD CONDITIONS

is more sane to believe that "the monks were the veritable founders of the culture of the middle ages, and the preservers too, of classic antiquity; it is impossible sufficiently to recognize the debt we owe them for their diligence in the transcription of books. Never did calligraphy reach a higher standard than in the ninth and tenth centuries, and the elegance of the decoration shows a keen sense of the beauty of form. The monks may be said to have handed on the lamp of art to later ages."

And can we pass by and forget the great men who have come to us from within the monastery walls? Anthony, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Benedict, Dominic, Bernard and Savonarola? While deprecating the wrongs of the system, let us be just and acknowledge the good it has done, particularly in those early days, when civilization was going to decay, and the little light was saved and kept aflame by the humble monk in his monastery cell.

Early Christian art began its modest career about the end of the first century, but strange to say, the coming of Christianity had little immediate effect upon the prevailing pagan or classical art, further than to hasten the change from the naturalistic to the symbolical, and Mr. Roger Fry writes: "That although under Christianity new influences found their way into European architecture and decorative design, still as regards the higher form of artistic expression, the treatment of the human figure and its surroundings, Christianity subsisted on the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

worn-out remnants of classical art till about twelve hundred years after its foundation as a religion."

Christian painting was destined to be hidden for nearly three hundred years, for its abiding place was beneath the earth's surface, in the catacombs of Rome. The history of art has never presented a more pathetic picture than that of the early Christian painters decorating the walls of those gloomy sepulchers of the dead.

The primitive Christians abhorred images and pictures, looking upon them as objects of idolatry; they believed it sacrilegious to attempt the representation of Deity, but later their attitude changed, and the figure of Christ was frequently painted as the Good Shepherd. The "Virgin and Child" was also a favorite subject.

The paintings in the catacombs portrayed Bible stories, deliverances from death, Old Testament characters, and the miracles of Christ, particularly the raising of the dead to life. The painters of the catacombs developed no new style, nor was their conception of beauty original, they were under pagan influence and "they twined the Christian theme in garlands of pagan flowers." Their figures were classical, showing a gradual deterioration from the best art of Rome and Greece. There still exists a remarkable painting in the catacomb of St. Calixtus. In the center, Christ is represented as Orpheus playing on a lyre; in the eight panels there are little landscapes and biblical scenes,—David with his sling, Moses striking the rock, Daniel in the lion's den, and the raising of Lazarus. The figures are

WORLD CONDITIONS

graceful, animated and well drawn. A favorite painting was a portrait of the dead, standing in the attitude of prayer, with arms outstretched forming a cross.

After the adoption of Christianity by Constantine, Christian art came forth from its hiding place to decorate the great basilicas which were being erected for the worship of God. Money was plentiful and lavishly employed in adorning the interiors until they glistened with beautiful mosaics.

Following the removal of the Roman capital to Constantinople, the center of civilization was transferred to the city of the East. Then Byzantine art began to develop, to build and decorate its temples. In the reign of Justinian, it "took on its final form; a fixed style of church architecture was developed, and in painting certain types were accepted from which the church would suffer no variation." It was contemplative and imaginative in character, suggesting the influence of the far East, but brilliant in execution as the people were fond of display. Yet the artists had little latitude; their gloomy patterns were ever before them, and their art became mechanical, wooden and soul-less. But it was the best art the world was to know until the days of emancipation came, and man was free to think and act for himself.

When the turmoil of invasion in Italy had ceased, Byzantine artists appeared, and in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries gave proof of their genius in Florence, Ravenna and Venice.

Byzantine art held sway for over seven hundred years, until the dawn of the Renaissance in Italy. It

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

was used most effectively in mosaic work and manuscript illumination, and left its richest examples in the decoration of churches, and beautifully illustrated books and missals. It did not make such great progress in painting, and we have been prone to judge Byzantine art by the few expressionless Madonnas and bloody crucifixions which we have seen in European galleries.

It is suggested by Lübke that painting proved to be too light for decoration in the basilicas which were built in the fourth century, and mosaics, which had hitherto been used for pavements, were employed to meet the demands for richer coloring. "To be sure this technical form was far surpassed by wall-painting in lightness and play of design; the more delicate lines of the physique, the softer shades of expression did not lie within the compass of its possibilities; but early Christian art laid but little stress upon the charm of physical grace, or the idyllic expression of sentiment. What it wanted was great and powerful fundamental features, forcibly expressed types of the sacred figures which should declare themselves unmistakably at a distance and fill the soul of the spectator with devout reverence. To this end, the Art of Mosaic, quite apart from its singular durability, was eminently suited."

Pompeii is a desolate place, and we do not love to think of the lava-encrusted figures in the museum, or the dreary street of the tombs, but rather of the delicate wall decorations and the mosaic floors, containing many dainty figures, and often by some symbol designating the name of the house.

WORLD CONDITIONS

It was in later centuries that mosaics were lifted from their menial position to decorate the ceilings of great basilicas, and the ancient city of Ravenna now guards its old mosaics as its most precious treasures.

Sidney Lawrence writes of the church San Apollinare Nuovo: "It is a primitive basilica, suggesting an Oriental origin, leading the eyes backward to Thebes and Tyre, and perhaps, educated to the perfection of Northern Gothic, we might at first have declared against this classic form of Christian Church, were it not for an indefinable sense of solemnity produced by the glorious lines of mosaics that cover the entrance wall, range down the long parallels of the side, fill the spaces above and between the windows, and find their termination in the solemn roof of the apse. Everywhere a continual succession of imagery—'One picture,' says Ruskin, 'passing into another as a dream.' The frieze above the arches is made up of a continuous procession of saints and martyrs, led by the three kings of the Orient, and ending on one side by the enthroned Christ, surrounded by angels and archangels. They are grave, stately forms, bearing the impress of Oriental tranquillity, and march along with solemn tread between the lines of olive trees, covered with blossoms and scarlet fruit. It is the story of the Epiphany told in the gorgeous color of the East, the rude materials entirely overcome by the aesthetic sense of the Byzantine artists. Scarlet, green, azure and white are wrought in among the gold, black and purple, until they glow like jewels in a king's crown,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and light up the dark aisles with the splendor of an eastern sky. Between the windows are thirty full figures of apostles and saints, each in his golden niche."

The mosaics that decorate the walls of San Vitale represent an imposing procession of courtiers and ladies attending the royal pair (Justinian and Theodora), on the way from the palace to offer gifts at the shrine.

Some very ancient mosaics can still be seen in Rome, in the Church of Santa Costanza, built by Constantine in the fourth century, also in the church of S. Pudenziana. In the former there is a notable example of the intermingling of Christian and Pagan art. Christ is represented as the Ruler of the world giving the Gospels to St. Peter. In the spandrels of the arches vines are growing, Amor gathers the grapes, and there are figures of children playing on musical instruments. Until recently these mosaics have been looked upon as the oldest in Rome, but the claim is now made by noted authorities that the wonderful decorations on the triumphal arch and aisles of Santa Maria Maggiore were executed in the second and third centuries.

Many of the churches in Rome are profusely decorated with mosaic. There is not a wall painting in great St. Peters, but there are beautiful copies of masterpieces, the work of modern mosaicists, which can with difficulty be distinguished from frescoes until closely approached.

The subjects employed by the mosaicists were prescribed by the church, Madonnas, "Christ

WORLD CONDITIONS

Enthroned," "The Baptism of Jesus," and "The Good Shepherd." These were usually done in heroic style, and one is sometimes overawed by the vastness of the figures, as in the cathedral at Pisa where the gigantic Christ repels by its fierce strength.

Venice became the school of the mosaic workers at a later period, and the ceiling of San Marco glows with a golden radiance. The cathedral is one of the few great edifices which remain to remind us of the richness of Byzantine architecture. The mosaics are bewildering, and would require much study; some of them very old, others very modern, and many have been restored. We can trace on the dimly lighted ceiling portraits of the saints, stories from the Old Testament, scenes from the life of Jesus; but we must come morning after morning to see them all, for the eyes cannot bear the strain for long and the upturned face soon causes much weariness of body. It is very interesting to note the variety of pictures thus spread out before our vision. There are grotesque figures, stately figures, awkward figures and graceful figures; there are unlovely saints, stern old patriarchs, gentle maidens, beautiful angels, yet all commingling, form a unique decoration and one of the most brilliant in existence.

In the eighth century the progress of art was checked by an edict of Leo, Byzantine Emperor from 718-741, prohibiting the worship of images. It was charged that Christianity had made more gods than it had destroyed, so bigotry began to destroy the gods Christianity had made. This was an early outbreak of a superstition which later in Italy white-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

washed Giotto's frescoes and in England, under Cromwell, demolished works of art in the cathedrals.

Leo had a determined opponent in the person of Pope Gregory II, and after a controversy of many years duration, more liberal views prevailing, the artists came forth from the monasteries, and the next century witnessed a revival in painting.

From this period to the twelfth century, Byzantine was the prevailing art, and with the expansion of man's intellect and love of beauty it reached its highest excellence. But still the artist had no latitude; the church presented the form, permitting no expression of original thought, and the painter, instead of creating, must be content to copy. It was not until the artists, wandering into France and Italy, freeing themselves from their environment, that the awakening came, and only then by slow degrees of faltering evolution; therefore it is quite natural that, they being not yet qualified to do original work, should revert to classic art. Representations of the Virgin Mary as a Greek goddess began to appear in sculpture and painting, but the artists themselves were not slow to see that an art so cold could never be revived, for there were already intimations of the Renaissance, a yearning for a new birth.

Mr. Roger Fry illustrates this change in art most adequately with the sculpture on the cathedrals of Chartres and Rheims, where in a few years, from the last half of the twelfth century to the dawn of the thirteenth, it progressed from the classic to the neo-Christian: He writes, "All these changes of form are, in fact, the outcome of a new ideal of character;

WORLD CONDITIONS

at last the artist has found a type which will convey distinctly that gracious and self-respecting humility of bearing which was so essentially a Christian conception of character, and which classic art had never attempted, having never conceived of humility as other than a weakness. We have then, in this new art, evidences of a sudden increase in the feeling for pure sensuous charm and at the same time, for spiritual grace. And it is this which gives to the finest work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries such a unique power that there is no conflict between sense and spirit, but out of a perfect union of the two each gains a rare intensity."

In Italy the conception of the new art was struggling in the thought of such men as Margaritone d'Arezzo, and Guido da Siena, but the two or three examples of their work which exist are pathetically ugly. A little later Niccolo Pisano, and his son Giovanni, produced those wonderful masterpieces, the pulpits of Pisa and Siena, and quickly following them, Duccio and Cimabue painted their pictures, still influenced by Byzantine ideas, but showing evidences of falling chains, and free, untrammelled vision.

From this little group, there soon steps forth a younger man, who, throwing tradition to the winds, paints as he wills and feels, and reveals to the astonished world of his day, the power of imagination. His name is Giotto di Bondone.

Now we must look back a few years into the previous century to find the influences which were at work, slowly undermining the fabric of the false and cruel civilization.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Italy has supplied the arena for much of the world's glorious history and achievement, but the period of the twelfth century was possibly the time of her most hopeless and helpless condition; they were troublous days of confusion and warfare. The country from north to south was divided into numerous principalities, the strength of each centering in some city like Florence, Milan, Naples, Perugia or Ravenna. Each city was at war with every other city, and often within a city itself there were two great factions contending, "the conquerors of to-day being the defeated ones of to-morrow."

Italy was the home of Catholicism. In the eighth century, during the reign of Charlemagne, her first king, the popes had been granted temporal power, and from the time the church became a political force, it ceased to be an assuagement for the ills of life. For many long years the common people were crushed between the great mill-stones, the church and the state, and those who served under the banners of the noblemen were no better than vassals or slaves. Tenderness, pity, love, brotherhood, were words unknown, and it is a melancholy fact, that in this time of great need the church should have failed so completely in its redemptive work and fallen so far short of its ideals.

We attempt no arraignment of the Catholic church in these pages, but the history of the church at this time is dark and doleful reading. The church was largely responsible for the deplorable conditions; the people were illiterate, ignorant,

WORLD CONDITIONS

superstitious, poverty stricken, barbarous. The country was infested by robbers, the cities stricken with plagues and diseases. No light was visible and love of the beautiful had all but disappeared. If any desired an education it was obtained only in the most meager way from such of the priests as were willing to disseminate the limited knowledge they themselves possessed.

This world has passed through many crises, and the power of personality has rescued it always from its defeats and shame. Men have degraded it, but men have also lifted it up. These saviors have been mighty soldiers, subtle statesmen, drastic reformers or gentle saints, who have dared to set their wills in opposition to the will of the world and have conquered it.

It is significant that the man who brought the light at this period was one whose life was wholly dominated by that of his Master, and who has that unique position in the thought of many serious historians of having lived the life of Christ more perfectly than any other person. I refer to St. Francis of Assisi. He lived but a few years, his career was very, very short; his spirit was gentle, his life so simple that we wonder at its power. *But he loved much*, and hatred fell before love. It always will.

Not many years after his death his teachings seem to have been forgotten, for the world fell back into the old ways; but soon a great light was diffused; it spread with ever increasing radiance, and men looked into each others' faces and said, "Whence comes this light?"

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

There were those who said, and history confirms it, "Saint Francis of Assisi was the Forerunner of the Renaissance."

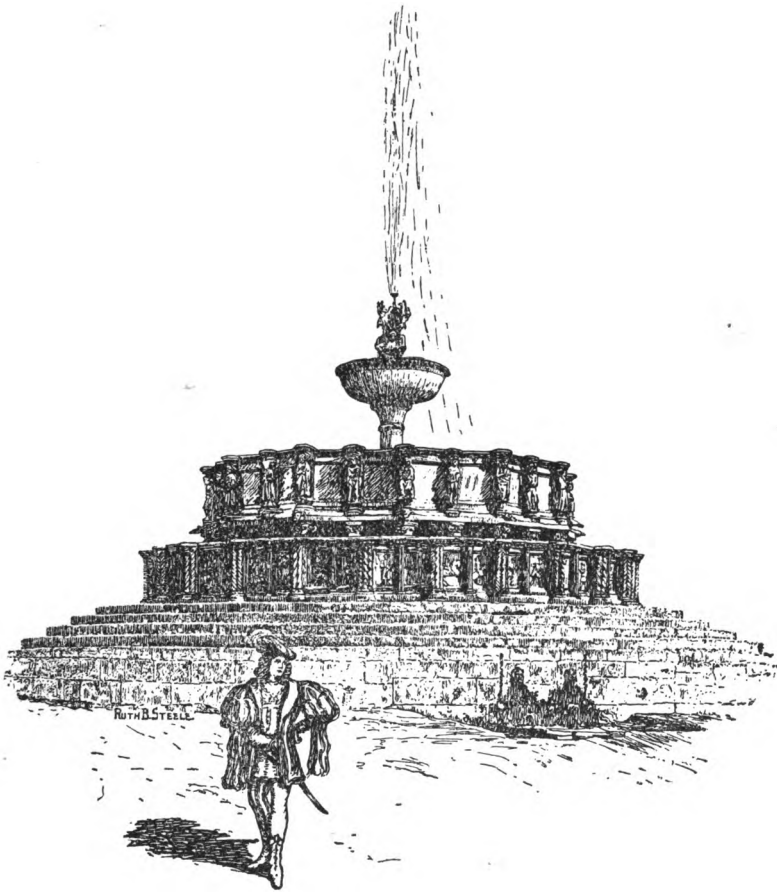
We cannot make the assertion that the Renaissance came with Giotto and his contemporaries; those were days of advancing light and culture, but better days were to follow.

It is possible that I have painted too dark a picture of conditions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is true that here and there an oasis of light appeared on the horizon (as, for example, the University of Bologna), but we are apt to form our conclusions from contrasts, and such a wonderful revival in religion, learning and art took place in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, that we are prone to look upon all preceding periods as chaotic and hopeless.

The great awakening began in the early years of the thirteenth century. A strong wave of desire made its appearance, insisting upon a reformation in the church and a dissemination of knowledge which had hitherto been confined to the cathedral and monastic schools.

Universities sprang into life in prominent cities of Italy, and Oxford and Cambridge started on their eventful careers in England. France became honey-combed with institutions of learning, where medicine, science and logic were given special attention. Germany and Spain soon followed, and the fifteenth century closed contributing its greatest gift to the world, the discovery of America.

PERUGIA



CHAPTER II

PERUGIA

Italy has more than once held the center of the stage while the great world-drama was being enacted, but never so gloriously as when fighting for existence and freedom, and the names of Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel thrill us through and through, arousing our patriotism to the highest pitch. In the glamour of their achievement, other times, places and men are momentarily forgotten, but history is the great conservator, and we turn sometimes with eagerness to days of lesser excitement and to men of more ethical and artistic qualifications. There was such a period in Italy at the dawn of the twelfth century, troublous days they were, too, but not beset with all the problems of a maturer civilization.

Italy to-day, restored as a world-power, is strong in her unity, but then she was rent and torn with strife; divided into many provinces—provinces into cities—cities into parties—parties into families—all fighting promiscuously, because it was a fighting age in the evolution of man, and he seemed to long for that which his neighbor possessed.

Among the provinces of central Italy, Umbria was most important. That portion of Italy extending from Rome on the south to Florence on the north, has been called the "cradle of civilization," and the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

dawning of that better day first made its appearance over the Umbrian hills. Umbria! Umbria! How melodious is the word, Umbria! It seems to linger and hum itself through our lips not wishing to be released and lost in the outer air. Her story is very old and full of tragedy. Once possessing wide domain from Adriatic to Mediterranean, her boundaries grew less and less as hostile Etruscans pressed her inland until the friendly Apennines raised their stony arms endeavoring to shield her from further invasion.

But a puissant force was organizing in the south which nothing could withstand, and Umbrians and Etruscans joining against a common enemy, were crushed before it and became Roman subjects three hundred years before the Christian era. Then followed centuries of struggle with popes—division of territory into dukedoms—strife between cities—invasions by northern hordes who must needs pass through Umbria on their way to Rome, until at last came unification and peace through Victor Emmanuel.

Umbria has been slumbering peacefully for many years, her cities on their lofty pinnacles watching over her like silent sentinels, and guarding her from intrusion. Her peasant folk have tilled the soil and gathered the crops quite oblivious of the outside world of clamor and commercial industry. Perugia, Assisi, Orvieto, Gubbio, Spello, Spoleto, Montefalco, Trevi, are the names of ghostly cities where the winds howl and spirits brood. Until recently the swiftly moving express trains from Rome to

PERUGIA

Florence have passed them by all silent and grey to curious eyes peering from compartment windows. But to-day the bars are down, and a new country of pastoral delight, verdant ruggedness and artistic beauty, is being invaded by many travelers.

The scenery of this region is wild and diversified, and a great calm and stillness lingers over the whole valley. There are long stretches of fertile plains, on which rest the rocky hills with towers or cities on their crests. The Tiber flows sluggishly through the valley, there are lakes, large and small, and the snowy peaks of the Apennines are visible on the far horizon. And yet nature is in her tenderest mood in this little portion of the world's great acreage, and we cannot imagine such a spirit as that of St. Francis of Assisi flourishing in any other soil, for here his contemplative mind was always enswathed in a sympathetic atmosphere.

And central Italy too, must needs be the territory where the artist's mind and thought should reach its highest development, for where else could be found the *chiaroscuro*, that light and shade, which mingled with life form the foundations of all true art. Thus Giotto, Italian artist, absorbed the beauty of his surroundings, and appropriating the world of Dante's imagination, struggled bravely to bring into being a new standard of art. Beauty and imagination did not find a fertile soil in Giotto's brain, yet they thrived there, and although he was more naturalist than idealist, he became the forerunner of that illustrious line of men who produced the greatest paintings the world had ever seen.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

With this glance at Giotto and the art environment of St. Francis, we turn to study more intimately the places where they lived and accomplished their work.

Historical interest radiates from men and women, for they are the makers of history. We love biography and auto-biography because of the personal note, the revelation of innermost thought, the intimacy with the spirit. Men and women must have dwelling places, and these are the arenas of their deeds and trials, their victories and defeats, their joys and sorrows. So, next to the personal interest, is that which centers around the tale of cities.

Existing conditions contributed to the making of thrilling history in those long ago days. The times were semi-barbaric, men's passions were unchecked, years and years of warfare had hardened their hearts and made their natures cruel. Religion was a form and permeated with superstition. The common people were ignorant, vast riches were in the hands of the few, and class distinction was clearly drawn.

In the thirteenth century the territory comprising central Italy was divided into numerous petty principalities, each one ruled by a duke or perhaps by a haughty and powerful family. Huge fortresses began to be built in the cities on the hills, whence the noblemen with their vassals would sally forth to engage in warfare with their neighbors for territorial possession. During infrequent intervals when peace prevailed without and within, these little principalities prospered, the weaker ones only to be

PERUGIA

crushed later in strife, and made to contribute their wealth to their stronger foes. This condition of civil warfare continued for centuries and delayed the coming of a United Italy.

Perugia and Assisi were good types of these belligerent principalities, and as it was in these and other cities in Umbria that St. Francis spent many years of his life and Giotto did much of his painting, it is important that we should know them well.

While it is true that seven hundred years have passed since the death of St. Francis, not many changes have taken place in these antiquated towns. The old fortresses, reminders of stormy days, have been pulled to pieces by a happier people, and the frowning walls have been permitted to fall in ruins, announcing to all the world that the barriers which were once erected to keep it out, are forever demolished. The ancient glory has departed, but the old fountains, the churches, the palaces and the houses are still standing, and the narrow steep streets are to-day the arteries of a diminishing trade.

Without, on the hillsides and in the valleys all has changed. Where war and pillage caused devastation, peaceful days and cultivation of the fields have made a great garden of the Umbrian plain, and prosperous farms and vineyards stretch away as far as the eye can see.

Let us begin with Perugia, although that city was not so closely associated with St. Francis and Giotto as others, but Perugia was Umbria's strong right arm, and her story is in many details the story of Umbria, for she had to bear the brunt of many

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

invasions, and fight the desperate battles against the barbarians.

The historians of Perugia claim great antiquity for their city, and would have us believe that it was settled by the survivors of the flood, existing continuously from that day to this. It is quite possible that the Umbrian valley was long ago submerged by a great lake, and that the Perugian hilltops were either entirely inundated, or thrust their heads out of the vast expanse of water, forming rocky islands similar to those which still remain in Lake Trasimene.

A portion of Central Italy was once Etruria, and we are reasonably sure that Perugia was one of the twelve powerful cities of the Etruscan league. Little is known of the Etruscans. They came from Lydia in Asia Minor and settled on the peninsula in prehistoric times. We look with awe upon the ruined towers and ponderous walls still standing in some of the "hill towns," and wonder at the barbaric civilization. The old tombs which have been unearthed bear many inscriptions in which the proper names only are intelligible to scholars. Etruscan ships once held sway in the Great Sea, and Etruscan kings ruled in Rome until B. C. 500, but after that date the power of Rome increased and one by one the Etruscan cities fell.

Perugia first came into conflict with Rome in B. C. 309, and warfare continued for many years until in B. C. 40 she was captured by the Emperor Augustus, who, however, found nothing but ruins, for the city was burned to the ground by her own sons when the siege was raised. The new city

PERUGIA

which arose on the old site assumed the proud name "Augusta Perusia," and this title has remained, carved on her gateways through all the vicissitudes of two thousand years. In the sixth century Perugia was taken by Totila, king of the Goths, and later fell under the rule of Lombardy, then became Byzantine.

The relation of Perugia to the papacy forms a chapter in her history filled with plottings, intrigues and servitude. The people were wild, warlike, barbarous and irreligious. Incapable of self-government, they desired to be let alone, so that they might pursue their evil course of subjugating their neighbors. In these raids the Perugians often came into conflict with towns under the protection of the popes, which so enraged the holy fathers, that in the thirteenth century one of them excommunicated the whole city. The Perugians showed their contempt for this decree by marching through their streets with an effigy of the pope, concluding by burning it in the cathedral square. Several times the city was placed under papal rule by official action, but Perugia refused to notice it, and the popes seemed afraid to press their claims. Innocent III. was the first pope who gained the semblance of a footing in the city. The people, vacillating and desperate, began to find it convenient to appeal to the power at Rome to settle their disputes and to aid them in matters of diplomacy. Taking advantage of this evidence of weakness, those who came after Innocent III. increased their authority and control, until the people alarmed at the encroachment upon their

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

freedom, revolted and evicted their representatives. Then followed reconciliation, a treaty, and the acceptance of the rule of Urban VI. near the end of the fourteenth century.

Meanwhile Perugia had been growing in strength and wealth gathered by tribute and plundering. Costly palaces were erected, and powerful nobles sought to control her destiny. Burdensome taxes were levied on the poor, and oppression in every form prevailed until a condition was established not unlike that which preceded the French Revolution. "Under the rule of the nobles the pages of Perugia's history tell a story so full of crime and bloodshed, that one shudders as one reads." The advance of papal power was forgotten in the internecine disorder. Time after time were the nobles driven from the city, only to return and rule with greater cruelty. Life and property were unsafe, and the population was depleted by continuous warfare.

It was inevitable that this state of affairs should develop leaders, and the Oddi, Baglioni, Michelotti, and Fortebraccio families came into prominence, adding much luster to the reputation of the city by their brilliant deeds.

Biordo Michelotti was the first to assume leadership from among the people. He expelled the nobles, corrected many of the existing wrongs, and Perugia seemed on the way to better things, but the papal power, which had been watching the disintegration with satisfaction, now came into action through the person of the abbot of San Pietro, who fearing that the growing popularity of Michelotti would weaken

PERUGIA

the hold of the church, caused him to be murdered by a band of assassins. The people, discovering the plot, were wild with rage, and in their fury tore to pieces the abbot's palace, and drove the priests from the city.

Braccio, the next prominent ruler, was a mighty warrior, whose ambition dared him to believe that he might one day become the conqueror of Italy. He gathered together his army outside the walls of Perugia, and captured it in 1416, after a desperate battle. Contrary to the expectations of the people, he took no advantage of his success, but sought to consolidate their interests and make Perugia a still greater power. For seven years the city prospered and grew strong, but Braccio's restless desire for conquest soon brought an end to his career, for he was killed in a battle with Aguila in 1423.

After his death the nobles gained complete supremacy, and then began to fight among themselves for control. In the years which followed, the city was the center of turmoil and disorder, there were daily skirmishes in the streets, life was unsafe, government was demoralized, and out of it all emerged the Baglioni family, whose exciting history, magnificent living and romantic career would fill many pages of thrilling story.

After its downfall the city fell under the power of Rome, forced to seek her aid on account of her desperate condition. Occasionally the old pride would assert itself and a revolt would follow, which would be speedily crushed and heavier burdens imposed, and we read that finally industries died

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

out, poverty, famine and pestilence decimated the city, and in 1728, from a petition presented to Clement X, it appears that Perugia "was reduced to such a state of wretchedness as to bring tears to the eyes of those who remembered her former prosperity." Thus she remained until Italy was occupied by the French, when she became a part of a French province. After Napoleon's final defeat, the city continued to exist but always chafing under papal rule. In 1859 an insurrection broke out against Pope Pius IX, which was quickly quelled, and in the following year Victor Emmanuel set her free forever. Since that happy time she has enjoyed peaceful days and a degree of prosperity.

Catholicism must have undergone a fearful strain during those centuries, and a Protestant wonders how it continued to exist while there was such enmity in the hearts of the people against the papal power. That the warfare was more of a political than religious nature, there can be no doubt, yet how puissant must have been the religion itself to have held the people while hatred existed in their hearts against the popes and priests.

Wherever one travels in Italy, one is impressed with the fact that the present day civilization, as we call it, has been obtained through a tremendous loss of the physical. Perugia of to-day, with its broken walls, deserted palaces and peaceful streets, appeals to our imagination only as we meditate on her history, yet the Perugia of to-day is a better Perugia than that of yesterday. If the past has taught the present anything, it is the truth that mind is greater



CORSO VANNUCCI, PERUGIA



STREET SCENE ON MARKET DAY, PERUGIA

From photographs by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

than matter, and brain is more enduring than brawn. Nevertheless, as one now walks the quiet streets of Perugia, one sighs a little for a glimpse of her former magnificence. The words "Augusta Perusia" carved on her gateways, seem but a mockery, for viewed from modern standpoints the town is fast asleep, and very dull. Even commerce finds her steep hills too difficult to climb, and the great world questions of the twentieth century are being solved without her coöperation. So Perugia has settled down, after all these centuries of exciting history, into a quiet Italian city. She has contributed her glowing page to the world's story and withdrawn, while other cities have been occupying the center of the stage. Future years alone will divulge whether she will again play an important part.

Modern Perugia is a town of about twenty thousand people. It is located midway between Florence and Rome, and the railroad ride thither from Florence is through a beautiful farming country. In the month of May the wheat is standing high in the fields, and the grape vines are swinging in graceful festoons from the mulberry and olive trees. Men, women and children are busily at work, barefooted and barelegged, scantily clothed, their heads protected with big hats from the hot sun. The farms are models of neatness and a joy to the beholder, every bit being cultivated, and the seed so carefully planted, that the grain springs up and grows in perfect rows between little shallow ditches that hold the rain, which trickles slowly through the ground and moistens the roots.

PERUGIA

About ten miles from the city the train approaches Lake Trasimene, or the Lake of Perugia, and skirts its shore for a quarter of an hour. It is a placid body of water about ten miles long. There are numerous islands rising out of it, high and rocky, each crowned with its castle, tempting the traveler to come and explore. We are passing by historic ground, for it was in one of the defiles near its rocky shore that Hannibal, in 247 B. C., waylaid the Roman army under Flaminius, and completely annihilated it.

Continuing the journey, a little later Perugia comes in sight perched away up on its lofty summit. It appears like a large, imposing city from the distance, with its massive grey buildings, and its towers reaching far into the sky. The railroad station is below in the valley, and the drive up the steep hillside consumes half an hour, or a little less by the trolley-car. The road is broad and smooth, winding about so continuously that the ascent is hardly perceptible.

Perugia being centrally located, is a most convenient place of sojourn for those desiring to visit the "hill towns." It is the capital of Umbria, and modern enough to contain the comforts to which we are slaves, more or less, but which minister to our general peace of mind and happiness. The city sprawls on the top of its mountain like a huge spider, projecting its narrow hilly streets in almost every direction, and frequently one's walk is abruptly terminated by the brow of a precipice. The houses are of dark dingy stone, three or four stories

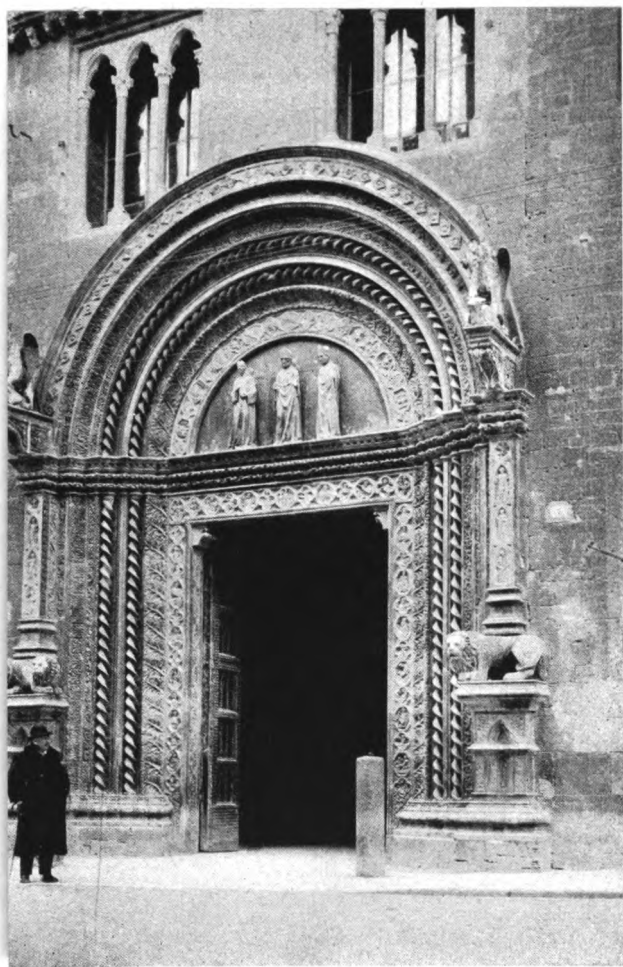
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

in height, built close to the street. Stone steps lead to the forlorn and untidy entrances; the blinds are drawn, the shutters closed and signs of life are seldom visible. On some of the streets the buildings join above the first story, forming long dark tunnels, spooky walks, even in daylight.

Portions of the old city wall are still standing, and the ancient gates are massive and picturesque, each bearing a different name, Porta Eburnea, Porta Marzia, Porta Nuova, Porta Romano, Porta S. Angelo. Sentries are stationed at the gateways and view you with suspicion as you pass out or enter in, and the poor peasants have to pay a tax on the produce they bring into the city markets to sell.

The location of Hotel Brufani is superb, occupying the highest point in the town on the edge of the mountain, overlooking the valley as Hotel Tramon-tano at Sorrento overlooks the sea. Near the hotel are the handsome municipal buildings and the Bank of Italy, forming the most modern group in the city. The *piazza* where they stand was once occupied by the old fortress which the people pulled to pieces when they became free. There is a little park with trees and flowers, and a balustrade extends around two sides, the south and east, upon which you may lean and gaze out over the valley.

Corso Vannucci, the principal thoroughfare, is a broad street with numerous shops, restaurants and tea-houses. There are some fine old medieval buildings in this street, with beautiful windows, balconies and doorways. The great Palazzo Pubblico is the most prominent of all, and its main



PALAZZO PUBBLICO, PERUGIA
From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

entrance, with richly carved recessed arches, pillars supported on the backs of lions, and ornamented with griffins and figures of saints, is the choicest bit of architecture in Perugia.

At the termination of the corso is the famous old fountain designed by Bevignate, the handiwork of Niccolo Pisano and his son Giovanni in 1277. It is composed of three basins, two of marble, one of bronze. On the first are many panels with carved figures representing the months, fables, and scenes from the old testament; the second is supported by slender columns, and around it are twenty-four statuettes of saints; the whole fountain is protected by a strong iron railing whose spikes have often held the dripping heads of noblemen. Damaged and blackened with age as it is, this fountain is still very beautiful.

Facing the square beyond the fountain is the cathedral. At the left of the entrance is a statue of Pope Julius III; at the right, built out upon the wall of the building is a pulpit, in which San Bernardino used to stand and preach to the people below. It is all very quiet and peaceful here this May afternoon, but it has been the scene of bitter strife in bygone days, and the square and cathedral steps have been stained with the blood of Perugians and their foes.

Not far from the Palazzo Pubblico is the Collegio del Cambio, the old Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade. The Hall is small with benches on either side and the judicial throne at the end. Here the merchants and money changers used to sit and

PERUGIA

transact the daily business. The walls are profusely decorated with frescoes by Perugino. On the left as you enter are five panels of famous heroes, Trajan, Scipio, Pericles and others; above them are some of the virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance; opposite the entrance are two large paintings, the "Transfiguration" and the "Nativity," while on the right wall are figures of prophets and sibyls. The paintings are well preserved and good examples of Perugino's best work. There is some beautiful *intarsia* work on the panels which surround the room, and the ceiling is decorated with medallions of the planets by pupils of Perugino. The chamber is dark and gloomy, the only source of light a small window over the entrance. Evidently the old Perugians regarded business seriously, and their daily meetings in this somber hall must have been free from levity, to say the least. They had only to lift their eyes to the walls and see the "virtues" to be assured that business should be honestly conducted.

Perugia's art gallery, always attractive, is doubly so this year (1907), for the churches and galleries of Umbria have loaned their treasures for a tiny exposition. Assisi, Spello, Spoleto, Terni, Orte, Orvieto, Todi, Montefalco and Foligno, have contributed paintings, altar-pieces, altar-cloths, vestments, robes, pottery and relics, and have been so forlorn during their absence, and so fearful of damage or accident, that they have vowed never again to send them outside their gates. But in the meantime they all combine to form a most interesting exhibit which is almost exclusively Umbrian.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

We must remember that Perugia was the center of Umbrian art and the home of Pietro Vannucci (Perugino). The art gallery bears his name, Pinacoteca Vannucci. In his studio hard by, Pinturiccio, Raphael and many other artists, learned the secret, and while it is often said that Perugino became famous as the master of Raphael, his own work is original and strong, and his paintings are eagerly sought out by lovers of art.

Perugino was born about 1446, in the little town of Città della Pieve, twenty-five miles from Perugia. Vasari records that while very young he was taken to Perugia and put to work in the shop of an artist whose identity is unknown. Under this influence he chose his profession, and received instruction from such masters as Niccolo da Foligno, Bonfigli, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and Pietro della Francesca. So the interest in the Perugian gallery centers around the pictures of Perugino and his masters, all of whom save Francesca are well represented by many of their best paintings.

As we look at them we are reminded of Napoleon's ruthless pillage of Perugia during the occupancy of Italy by the French. Nothing was secure from the clutch of his greedy hand, and for weeks and months loads of art treasures were seen crossing the border to adorn the French Capital. The very day the treaty was signed with France, Napoleon sent his representatives to Perugia to demand free access to her buildings with permission to choose as many paintings as pleased them. The city, convulsed with grief and anger, attempted to hide or remove

PERUGIA

her beloved treasures, but all to no purpose; the great canvases could not be concealed, and the enemy was relentless in his search. Many beautiful altar-pieces were cut into sections, and the Perugians themselves were ordered to pack wagon-loads of the best of Perugino's works. "March 27, 1797, six carriages drawn by twenty-four oxen and attended by six peasants quitted Perugia amid the tears and lamentations of the people." Thirty-two pictures were taken to Paris at this time. Again in 1811, the city was subjected to a repetition of the outrage, and the people were told that they should rejoice that their pictures were deemed worthy to adorn the galleries of Paris. Forty-eight paintings were taken at this second pillage, and as there was insufficient space in Paris, many were given away to Court favorites or distributed in other cities.

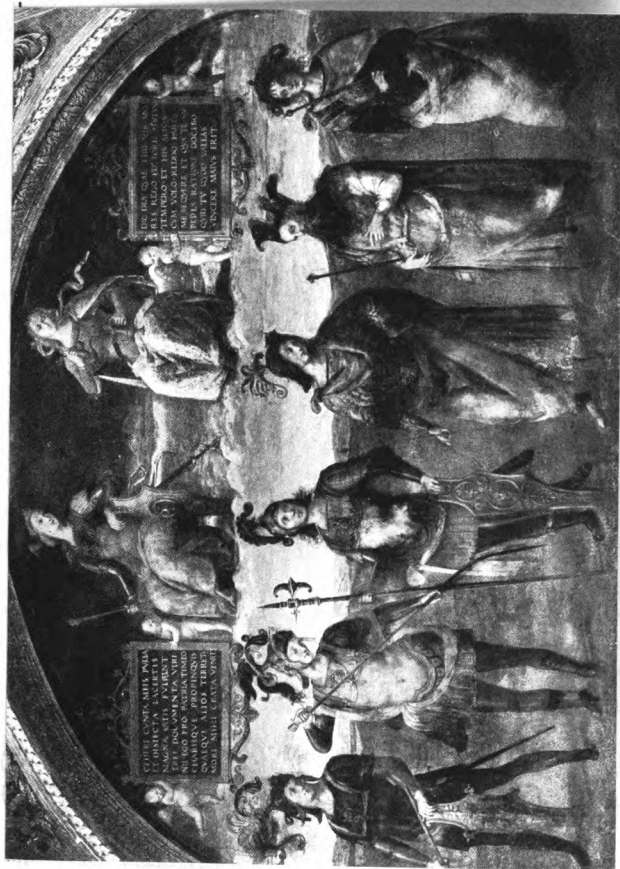
After the final defeat of Napoleon, the Perugians petitioned for the return of their treasures, and their prayer was granted. They were told, however, to come and get them. Canova undertook the commission, but found the task a hopeless one on account of the great expense and insurmountable difficulties.

Perhaps someone may say: "But how much better for the world at large to have these paintings in the Louvre." Yes, "for the world at large," but not for the true lover of art, for he would rather journey to that quaint Italian city and search out the beautiful creations of the master, Perugino, among the churches and monasteries on its hillsides, and absorb their loveliness in that friendly atmosphere.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

In the monastery of San Severo, now used as a school, there are two frescoes which create a profound impression. The upper one, a representation of the Holy Trinity, was painted by Raphael in 1505, and bears his signature. It resembles quite strongly, although on a much smaller scale the upper portion of his famous "Disputa" in the Vatican. It has been badly damaged by the elements, and the figures of God the Father, and one of the angels have entirely disappeared, but enough remains to assure us that it was a most excellent work. The other fresco below it was painted by Perugino in 1521. He was an old man of seventy-five, and his art had been declining for years. Raphael had been dead but a twelve month, taken in his early manhood, and a pathetic story is told of Perugino, with fading eyes and trembling fingers, seeking to paint something worthy which should complete his beloved student's work. That he succeeded well there can be no doubt, for the six figures of Saints Scholastica, Jerome, John, Gregory, Boniface and Martha, are stately and graceful.

The little hall of the Cambio and the chapel of San Severo are very fascinating places to visit. Here are the paintings in their original settings. It is pleasant to let the imagination take its flight, and choose the spots where the artist stood to do his task. Here is the door through which he entered every morning; there the window which gave him light; the slender scaffolding was erected here; there is the bench upon which he sat and rested, watching the progress of his work. It is true that the dim



FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE — Perugino
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

light in the Cambio gives us an imperfect vision of the stately figures on the walls, yet we think they are lovelier there in the spot where they were created than in some alien gallery.

Umbrian art was singularly pure and simple, and always religious. The people held it in veneration, and after seeing a collection of paintings like that in Perugia, one is impressed more than ever with the inherent power of religious art as it existed in those early days. Every picture was sacred, and as such was the object of sincere adoration, not on account of artistic merit alone, but as representing in form and color the personalities and events so dear to the hearts of all devotees of the Catholic church.

Perugia is a city of such moderate size, and the streets are so narrow and steep, that driving should be discarded and sightseeing undertaken on foot, at least within the town walls. Wherever one walks one finds interesting things, and mingling with the people brings one close to the heart of the city, so that for the time being you become one of her own citizens.

Two or three of the streets are dignified enough to have the appellation "Corso," as Corso Vannucci—Corso Cavour—Corso Garibaldi; the others are narrow lanes, or "ways" like Via Vecchia—Via Appia — Via della Stolle — Via Pinturicchio — via Marzia.

Corso Vannucci, the main thoroughfare, is a fine wide street, well paved, with quite a metropolitan air pervading it. The shops are modest little affairs, and along the sidewalks under the awnings are

PERUGIA

numerous tables, where the people sit, smoke cigarettes and sip the highly colored drinks, all of which reminds one of a diminutive Paris.

But the "narrow lanes" beckon us to come and see. We stand for a moment irresolute, peering down the steep inclines scarcely ten feet wide, covered for many feet where the houses join. The sun never penetrates to lighten them, or to warm the cold stones. The pavements are worn smooth, and the stones in the walls and arches are honeycombed with age; the odors are musty, the atmosphere chilly. As we advance we meet the faithful donkey bearing his load up the hill. Good order prevails, although there is loud talking in the numerous wine-shops. Children by the score, scantily clothed, but with beautiful faces, are playing in the gutters, each one munching a huge piece of black bread. Almost every woman has a baby in arms, and if you speak to the *bambino* her face brightens with a smile. The men and women of the poorer districts look worn and weary, their dark faces are heavily seamed, their backs bent with burden-bearing, but the dreadful poverty of the large Italian cities does not exist here. The people are lovable, gentle and courteous, good-natured and light-hearted; their necessities are few, their lives dull and monotonous.

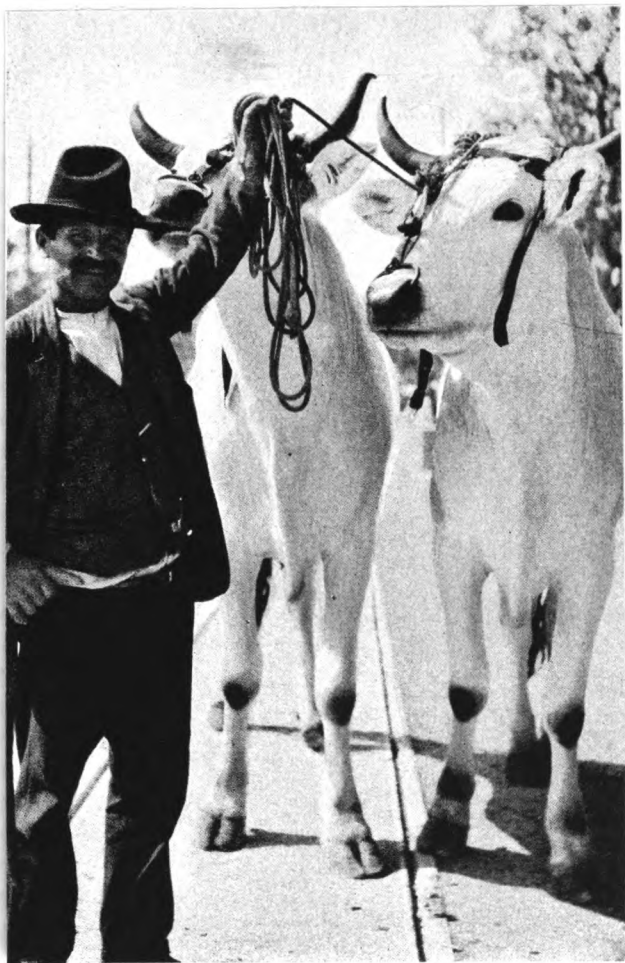
Continuing the walk we emerge into the sunshine, pass through one of the city gates, and approach the Piazza d'Armi on the plain below. If it be Tuesday morning we shall find the piazza crowded with farmers who have come in from the surrounding country with their cattle, horses, sheep and pigs, for

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

it is the day of the weekly fair. There is much commotion, a medley of sounds is in the air, and little groups are scattered about trading vigorously. Some of the cattle are beautiful; pure white, scrubbed and combed until every semblance of dirt has been removed. One pair in particular approaches us, led by the owner. They are as white as snow, with pink ears and pink nostrils, and they look at us with their big brown eyes; they are decorated with red ribbons, and the owner holds their heads high in the air, while we get the lovely picture safe in our camera.

Another day we take a long walk to the southeastern portion of the city, passing the old university established in the thirteenth century with its museum filled with Etruscan and Roman relics. A little further on is the ancient church of St. Angelo, built in the fifth century. It is octagonal in form; its sixteen columns of different sizes and qualities of stones, its strange architecture within and without, its broken altars, take us back many centuries. On the wall is a faded picture of a Madonna, one of the earliest frescoes in Perugia.

Retracing our steps we stop at the old convent of St. Agnes. In response to our ring the door is opened by the feeble Mother Superior, who shows us about with gracious courtesy, not omitting the three precious frescoes of Perugino which we came particularly to see. In a sweet low voice, speaking in French, she tells us of their priceless value, then leads us out into the little garden with a high wall about it, an old well in the center, and a big tree



PERUGIAN CATTLE

From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

spreading its branches all over the narrow area. On the right stretches away a wing of the convent; we hear a rustling sound, and looking up see three or four nuns trying to escape around a corner. Were they laughing like other girls, or were we mistaken? The guide book calls this a "suppressed convent"—possibly what came to our ears was suppressed laughter.

One afternoon we walked down a long, steep, narrow street to the church of San Bernardino. The façade is embellished with terra-cotta and parti-colored marbles, "and forms one of the most charming examples of polychromatic architecture in Italy." The statues, angel heads and musicians are a beautiful and interesting study.

The finest church in Perugia is San Pietro, with its tall slender spires visible from every portion of the town. The church was the original cathedral, and is said to be the only one which has retained its pictures. It is situated on the Hill of Calvary just outside the city. The exterior of the building is plain and unimpressive. The interior is divided into three aisles by numerous columns of granite and marble, taken from pagan temples. It is profusely decorated with frescoes and paintings which are very effective in appearance and coloring, but few of them are of value. The richest treasures in the church are the wonderfully carved stalls in the choir, designed by Stefano da Bergamo; each one has a different design, consisting of curiously wrought figures of animals, and they would repay many, many hours of careful study. The *intarsia* work on

PERUGIA

the doors of the choir is very wonderful too, unsurpassed anywhere in Italy. In the sacristy are small pictures by Perugino, and a little painting of Jesus and John attributed to Raphael.

And so these walks might be multiplied, but better even than the walks are the moments of rest when sitting at our open windows we gaze off upon the peaceful valley. From this lofty height we look down upon the tiled roofs of a portion of the town, then beyond over the vast Umbrian plain with its fertile farms and vineyards; then come the foot-hills of the Apennines, then range upon range of mountains ever mounting higher and higher until the most distant are crowned with snow. The bright Italian sunshine floods it all with a golden light, and as the big white clouds go floating by they cast their shadows on the green hills. On almost every promontory there is a tower. On the east we can see Assisi, Spello, Foligno, Spoleto, and in the far west the outlines of mysterious and lonesome Todi. Campaniles rise in the air all about us, and how the bells do ring! Their insistent tolling of every quarter reminds us of fleeting hours, and they make a great commotion and seem to rejoice when the sun is sinking and the day is done. We can see the white winding roads away down across the valley leading in every direction, and an occasional cloud of dust notes the passing of an automobile. No two days are alike; the sky is wonderfully blue, but clouds are plentiful, and from this high altitude they seem a little nearer to us. Very often the distant hills are entirely hidden from sight by intervening

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

clouds, then a nearer line of hills may be in the shadow, and we can look between them down some valley vista and see the sun shining behind them, making a vivid contrast. A thunder-storm is breaking on yonder mountain, and we watch the rain as it sweeps down upon us, sometimes reaching us, and sometimes drenching our neighbors while we remain in the sunshine. Later comes the glory of the setting sun, then the twilight with the purple glow on the mountains. The swallows are chirping and whirling by our windows, so close that we can almost touch them; the wind howls around our corner with mournful cadence; the air is soft and mild. We can hear a driver shouting at his donkey, a song comes to us from another direction, and a strain of music from the band at the barracks. A mist is coming down over the valley, and a new moon is just peeping through the clouds. The lights of the town are coming out one by one, but beyond there is nothing but gloom and silence profound, for the Italian evening sky is rather vague, and although the stars are shining they do not give the brilliant light of the more northern skies.

Thus the lovely scene fades from view. We close our eyes and thoughts too deep for utterance throng upon us; the centuries pass in stately procession leaving our faces serious and our eyes moist. And so Perugia,

GOOD-NIGHT

[60]

“AT PERUGIA”

“The young moon mounts; day fades from off the
plain;

No color of man's naming hath this sky,

Thrilled with the Beatific Vision nigh,

So passes a pure spirit without pain,

Like billows of a never-breaking main.

The Umbrian Apennines hang poised on high,

Snow-crested: yonder doth Assisi lie,

Lov'd shrine, whereof the whole world's heart is
fain.

So there from hill to hill was wont to wend,

And heal, and teach, and touch with living fire,

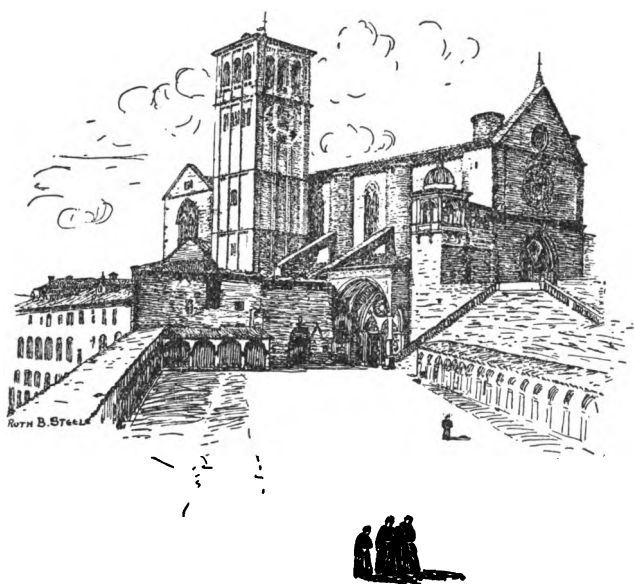
Francis, God's Saint, six hundred years ago!

And thou and I have six poor days to spend,

Tread back the past, and to yon heights aspire—

Move slow, dear earth, about the sun, move slow!”

ASSISI



CHAPTER III

ASSISI

The story of Assisi differs widely from that of Perugia. While her haughty neighbor, always on the offensive, was seeking her own aggrandizement through territorial possessions, Assisi, usually on the defensive, maintained for centuries a fight for existence. Both of these processes were demoralizing, yet the larger city grew stronger as her power increased, while the smaller, struggling alone, yielding up her life blood in ceaseless conflicts, became weaker and weaker, possessing no friends without, and little recuperative power within.

Assisi is a very, very old city, for in the pages of mythology it is recorded that it was founded by King Dardanus, the builder of Troy, and son of Jupiter and Electra. Her first known inhabitants were the Umbri, from whom the province of Umbria was named; they were driven out by the Etruscans. When Rome conquered Etruria in B. C. 309, Assisi with other Umbrian towns fell under the dominion of the Imperial City.

Her real life began at this period. This was the season of her greatest material strength and glory, for the Romans quickly transformed their acquired possessions into centers of magnificence and power. To-day, in modern crumbling Assisi, you read the story of this ancient splendor. You read it in the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ruins of Roman forum, Roman temples and theaters, Roman aqueducts and fountains, and the well preserved temple of Minerva remains a most beautiful example of classic architecture. With the decline of the Empire, Assisi lost her proud position, and when the barbarians overran Italy, she succumbed to their strength, being captured and occupied by Totila the Goth in 505.

Later, when Italy came under the rule of the Lombards, Assisi, being antagonistic to papal influence, was destroyed by Charlemagne, who had been called into Italy by Pope Adrian I, to help subdue the refractory provinces. This occurred in 774, and Charlemagne, after tearing the city to pieces, immediately ordered it to be rebuilt. Then followed long years of rulership by German princes, wars between Guelphs and Ghibellines, disturbances between Church and State, increasing riches among the nobles and corresponding poverty among the common people.

Tucked snugly away under the shadow of big Mt. Subasio, the little town would gladly have held itself aloof from the political struggles which kept Italy torn asunder for so many centuries. Perugia, however, was a quarrelsome neighbor, and the two cities clashed frequently, with the result that Assisi was always defeated and subjected to humiliating indignities. Assisi did not lack the warlike spirit, for she quickly recovered from disaster. Recognizing her weakness, she built a great wall, and crowned the summit of her hill with an immense fortress commanding an extended view of the valley, and

ASSISI

bidding defiance to the castle on the distant hilltop of Perugia. This fortress, called Rocca Maggiore, proved to be a most convenient place of sojourn for the invaders who were continually defeating the Assisians, and in 1177, we find it occupied by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who made it his headquarters while he was subduing the neighboring provinces. This was the posture of affairs at the time of the birth of St. Francis. On the expulsion of the foreigners sixteen years later, Assisi came under the rule of the Holy See, and her experience with the papal power was like that of Perugia, consisting of long years of servitude, revolts and defeats, then appeals for aid, followed by submission.

It is difficult to understand how the people could adjust themselves to conditions and circumstances with a new ruler every few months. However, the machinery of government was simple. All laws were defied and anarchy prevailed. Each citizen, if unattached to any of the reigning powers, must have sought out his own way of existence, giving little heed whether the castle were occupied by a Perugian lord, a papal emissary, or a German prince, and meeting his fellow townsmen only when an accumulation of wrongs compelled him to unite with them against the tyrant.

The coming of St. Francis doubtless softened the hatred and bitterness existing between the Umbrian towns, but after his death the old feuds revived, and Assisi and Perugia continued their warfare. Following his canonization, and the rearing of the great San Francesco church in his honor, Assisi became the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mecca of ceaseless pilgrimages, which, however, brought her little material prosperity, for the disciples of the saint were servants of "Lady Poverty."

In 1321 and again in 1442, Assisi was nearly destroyed by Perugia, and after the second defeat submitted to papal rule and gradually went to physical decay. For many years Assisi has been set apart, as it were, as a center of art and religion. One approaches her gates reverently, for she has been called the "Holy City," the "Seraphic City." Her narrow, steep streets are deserted, the marts of trade have well nigh disappeared, the grey stone houses are cold and fast-closed, and signs of life are visible only near the churches and in the little *albergos*.

Assisi is quite accessible from Perugia either by the train which winds its way slowly through the valley for an hour, or by a lovely drive of fifteen miles over the Umbrian plain. If it is spring time, and the latter route is chosen, it is well to start early in the morning before the sun's rays become too warm, for the way is open with no sheltering trees. The road stretches out before you white and smooth. The fields on either side are picturesque with the queer shaped trees of stunted growth, cut a few feet above the trunk with the forked branches remaining, serving as a receptacle for the fagots. Bunches of leaves are growing on the tips of the branches, while below, the festooned vines and ripening grain sway in the breeze. The road follows the river Tiber, a broad, shallow stream, crossing and recrossing it over gracefully arched bridges.



ASSISI

From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

An hour's ride from Perugia brings us to the old Etruscan tombs, discovered not long ago by a peasant, it is said, who, digging in the field, pierced the surface too deep with his spade and went through the crumbling roof. The descent to the tombs is through an open door, down a few steps, when the visitor finds himself in a large vault a little higher than his head, divided into small rooms and passages. With the light of tapers he views the great tombs of the Volumnii family, built of solid rock, with rich carving of many strange figures, huge serpents and Medusa heads, while in the crevices of the walls are the urns for the ashes of the dead. On the ceiling there are designs quite unintelligible. The darkness and the grinning heads are not conducive to cheerfulness, and one is glad to get out into the sunlight again to proceed thoughtfully on his way, for after viewing such antiquities life seems only a span.

It is very pleasant and restful jogging along over the Assisi road on a fine morning in May, and if one is interested in St. Francis, his heart will be beating fast with emotion, for this is the way oft traversed by him, and his haunts were in the adjacent fields and hills.

As we approach nearer and nearer, the town, which has been dimly visible all the morning, seems to emerge from the shadow of Mt. Subasio, and the great blue dome of Santa Maria degli Angeli lifts itself high in the air on the plain below. The city appears like a mass of greyish pink stone, with here and there a solitary tower or dome rising above the monotonous irregular housetops. On the extreme

ASSISI

left, conspicuous in its magnitude, is the long arcaded convent and church of San Francesco, while beyond and above all are the gloomy ruins of the old castle. We wonder if we are not gazing at a phantom city or a mirage, for there seems to be no sign of life, not even a cloud of smoke arising from the great pile of stone.

Although we are eager to reach the city, Santa Maria degli Angeli is so obtrusive in its vastness, that it compels attention.

It is located without the city at the foot of the mountain, on the plain among the olive orchards, a short distance from the railroad station. A small settlement has sprung up around it, and some day there may be an Upper and Lower Assisi, as there is an Upper and Lower Church within the city. Saint Mary of the Angels was begun in 1569. The exterior is not attractive, but the dome and bell tower are massive and imposing. The interior is vast, with nave, transepts and choir. There are a number of chapels with modern frescoes and a few paintings of doubtful value. The ceiling is vaulted, the choir stalls are rich, and the pulpits elaborate. We notice these details hurriedly, for our eyes are eagerly seeking that most precious of Franciscan possessions which this great edifice was built to shelter, the Portiuncula. At last we discover it far down the main aisle resting under the big dome.

The story of the Portiuncula is a pathetic one. When it was given to the Franciscans it was located in the oak woods on the slope of Mt. Subasio. After the death of St. Francis it was carefully preserved,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

in and out of the church. The thousands of candles the magnificence of the vestments stand out in relief from the dark wood carvings of the interior of the church. The incense ascends to the circle of light that is shed from the stained glass windows.

St. Peter's is primarily the church of the afflicted. There does the mourner go in the depths of his sorrow. And the feast of the Portiuncula is the one that comes nearest to the heart of the mourner. It is the belief of the Catholic church that there is a certain temporal punishment due to sin, even after the guilt of the sin has been forgiven, and that this penalty must be paid before the soul may enter into the perfect enjoyment of heaven. By the tenets of the church this temporal punishment may be remitted by a plenary indulgence. These are granted by the church on certain occasions in connection with the celebration of the festival. The Portiuncula is particularly the feast of the plenary indulgence of the Catholic church because the indulgence is not due to the feast, but the feast due to the indulgence. The indulgence obtained by the pilgrimages to the Franciscan churches may be applied to those souls in purgatory, whom the pilgrims desire to pray for. Therefore the faithful come to do all that lies in their power, according to their belief, to aid the souls of those who have gone before them down the road of death.

The history of the Portiuncula is most interesting. St. Francis of Assisi, who of all the saints of the Catholic church is the one who has ever been regarded as the saint for the sinner, was ever most



THE PORTIUNCULA

From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

anxious during his lifetime to secure spiritual favors for those who had erred. Of all the churches in Italy he most loved and venerated the little chapel, commonly called the Portiuncula, now enshrined in the great church St. Mary of the Angels, situated on the plains of the beautiful valley of Spoleto, a short distance from Assisi. This church he made the first church of his Order. Every year an increasing number of pilgrims attend St. Peter's. Between the masses and vespers only the steady tramp of thousands of feet breaks the heavily oppressive silence. It is an endless mourning procession performing the last rites of the dead. To any one who comes from the brightness of the outside world, from the turmoil of the business district, from the gaiety of the boulevards, even from the cheap garishness of the immediate neighborhood of the church, St. Peter's is a place of gloomy majesty: but to those who have known sorrows of loss and of loneliness, it is the church of consolation."

Let us turn now from this very modern celebration of the "Pardon of St. Francis" in this great city far removed from the center of Franciscan atmosphere, and become spectators of the real scenes which take place in Assisi every year early in the month of August.

The Portiuncula has always been enveloped in a mystical atmosphere. The place was dear to the heart of St. Francis, and he spent many happy hours kneeling before its peaceful shrines. Loving the little church so well, and the people so tenderly, it was quite natural that he should wish the sanctity

ASSISI

of the one to minister to the needs of the other. Why should this not become a holy place where all could come, confess their sins and be forgiven? Doubtless all that St. Francis did to accomplish this was to journey to Perugia and crave an indulgence from the Pope Honorius III; but almost every act of the saint's life has been embellished with legend and this important event did not escape. We are told that the Indulgence was granted as a result of this visit, but restricted to once a year, with no fixed date.

One night a few weeks later St. Francis was struggling with a great temptation. It was mid-winter, and to subdue his body, he rushed into the garden, naked, and threw himself on the snow. His flesh was torn by the thorns of the dead rose bushes, but wherever his blood had fallen, red and white roses appeared in full bloom. Then an angel spoke to him and bade him enter the Portiuncula where he had a vision. Our Lord and the Virgin Mary appeared to him and told him to again seek out the pope and ask for a date for the Indulgence. The next day with two companions he visited Perugia and told Pope Honorius of his strange experience. The date was fixed August second each year and was made perpetual.

Lina Duff Gordon in her book, the "Story of Assisi," has given a detailed account of the great event. The celebration itself is preceded by a fair which begins July twenty-ninth, continuing until August second. The peasants come from neighboring towns, bringing their wares for sale or exchange.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The streets and squares of the little city are crowded with people and animals, everybody is full of glee, and the whole scene presents a color which can be found nowhere but in Italy. When night comes the hills are dotted with many camp fires and shouts and songs are wafted up from the plain. As the day of the feast draws near, pilgrims come from all parts of Italy, men, women and children, each with a pack on his back bound up in gay-colored handkerchiefs. And now as spectators let us stand aside and watch the strange scene.

"Late in the evening of the thirtieth (July) we happened to be at the Angeli when a new batch of pilgrims arrived, and for a long time we watched them reverently approaching the Portiuncula on their knees, singing all the time the pilgrim's hymn, which resounded through the church in long-drawn nasal notes, ending in a kind of stifled cry. We were listening to Father Bernardine's peaceful talk about St. Francis, when suddenly we were startled by shrieks and screams in the church. 'It is nothing only the Neapolitans,' said Father Bernardine, smiling at our distress. But unable longer to bear what sounded like the moanings of the wind which always fills one with uneasy feelings, half of fear, half of expectation that something unusual is going to happen, we hurried once again into the church. There a sight met our eyes which we shall never forget. Lying full length on the ground, their faces prone upon the pavement, were women crawling slowly, so slowly that the torture seemed interminable, from the entrance of the great church to the

ASSISI

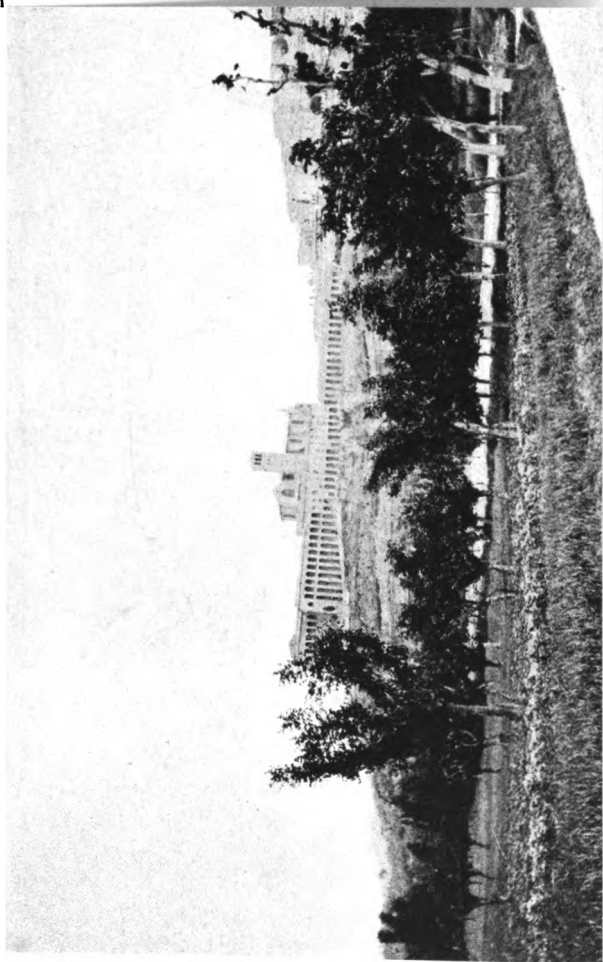
Portiuncula, and as they crawled they licked the floor with their tongues, leaving behind them a mark like the trail of a slug. One girl especially called forth our sympathy. She came running in out of the sunlight, and after standing for a moment at the entrance with her eager face uplifted towards the holy shrine, her eyes alight with the strange look of one bent upon some great resolve, she threw herself down full length upon the ground and commenced the terrible penance which she had come all the way from the Abruzzi mountains to perform. She was very slight and her black skirt fell round her like a veil, showing the delicate outline of her figure against the marble pavement. Resting her naked feet against the knees of a man kneeling behind her, she pushed herself forward with the movement of a caterpillar. Another man tapped his pilgrim's staff sharply on the floor in front of her face to direct her towards the chapel, whilst her mother ever now and then bent down to smooth away the tangle of dark hair which fell around the girl like a shroud. Just as this sad little group neared the Portiuncula the girl stopped as though her strength was exhausted, when the mother, choked by sobs, lifted the heavy masses of her daughter's hair and tried to raise her from the ground. The pilgrims pressed around singing '*Evviva Maria e Chi la credò,*' until the sound became deafening, while the men struck the ground almost angrily with their sticks, and at last the girl, still licking the floor, crawled forward once again. When she reached the altar of the Portiuncula she stretched

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

out one hand and touched the iron gates, and then like a worm rearing itself in the air and turning from side to side, she dragged herself onto her knees. As consciousness returned and the southern blood coursed again like fire through her veins, she started to her feet and with wild cries entreated San Francesco to hear her, beating the gates with her hands and swaying from side to side. The cry of a wounded animal might recall to one's memory the prayer of that young girl, storming heaven with notes of passionate entreaty wrung from a soul in great mental agony. We last saw her fast asleep on the steps of a side altar curled up like a tired dog, but on her face was an expression of great calm as though she had indeed found the peace sought in so repulsive and terrible a manner."

We may be quite sure that St. Francis would never have sanctioned or permitted such self-abasement as this, and it is gratifying to have our opinion of him confirmed by reading that this ceremony was a creation of the priests of southern Italy, and that the Umbrians looked upon it with disfavor.

The drive from the plain below to Assisi's gate is steep, stony and winding. There are beautiful views in every direction, but the attention is distracted from these pastoral scenes and rests upon the great grey mass of buildings, the Church of San Francesco, which seems to overshadow the little city. The architect of this church is unknown, the builder was Elias Buonbarone, or Brother Elias, one of the early friends and followers of St. Francis.

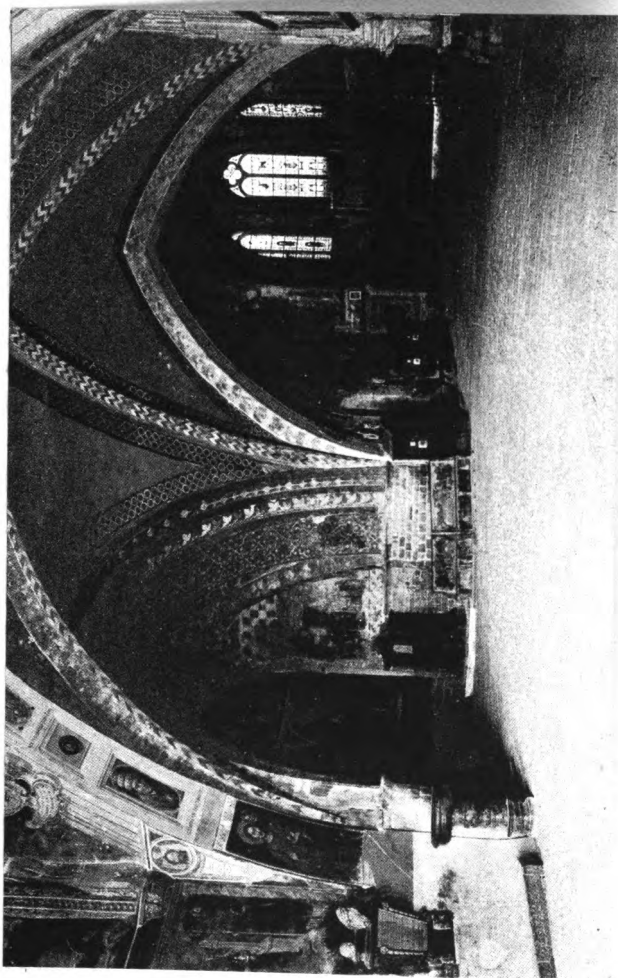


THE CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

When the death of the saint was inevitable, Elias was the first to see the importance of obtaining possession of his body for Assisi, and shortly after the obsequies he began to form plans to build the great church as the shrine of St. Francis, having secured the sanction and assistance of Gregory IX. He met with opposition, but this was easily overcome. We cannot criticise Elias for this action for the shrine of so great a saint would be the Mecca of many pilgrimages, and bring rich gifts and honor to any city. We must admit, however, "that the Order St. Francis founded, and prayed would continue as he left it, ceased at his death, while the Order that grew up afterwards bore the unmistakable stamp of Elias and the Vatican."

The foundations of the church were laid in 1228, and it is believed to be the first Gothic church erected in Italy. The work was undertaken with great enthusiasm under the energetic supervision of Elias. The plans were unique, as they contemplated building one church upon another, with a long wing of double arcades for the monastery. Within two years the Lower Church was under roof, in 1253 the whole structure was completed, and consecrated in that year by Innocent IV. But Elias was not present to share in the rejoicing or to receive his meed of praise among those who had made the great undertaking possible. He had made many enemies; had become deeply involved in the politics of the day; was accused of having Ghibelline tendencies and had lost the favour of Innocent IV, who had excommunicated him. At the time of the con-



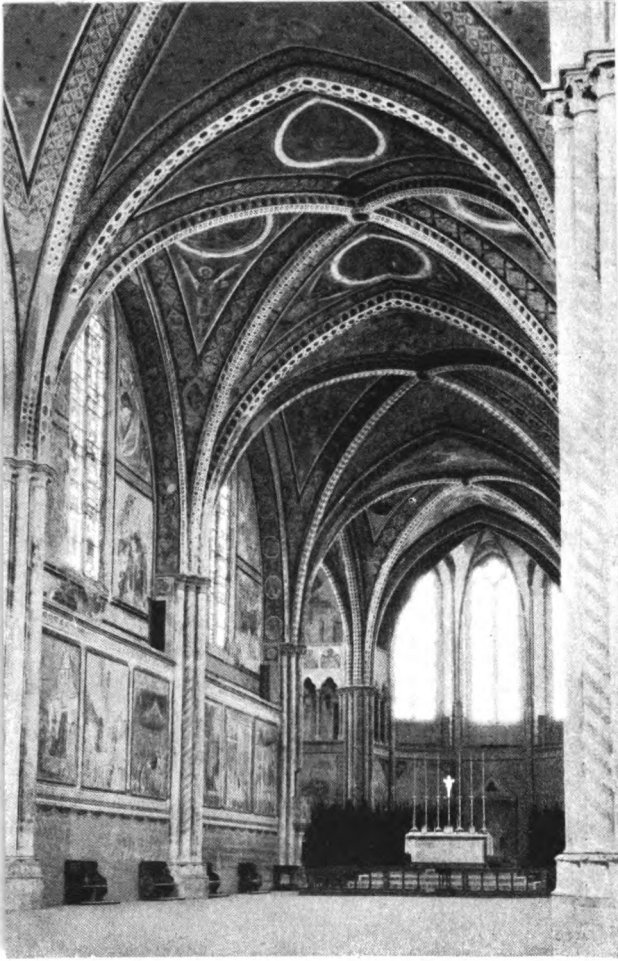
LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

separation he was in Cortona dying, and forsaken by all save a brother friar who brought him the consolation of the pope's forgiveness a few days before his life came to an end.

There are very few level spots in Assisi, it is all up and down hill, and the streets turn and twist along the face of the mountain. The houses and shops are so alike and monotonous that one barely notices them, and it is a relief when an open *piazza* occasionally comes into view. Such a space forms the approach to San Francesco, flanked on either side and on the northern end by long arcades, and protected on the western side by a broad stone wall which, in its turn, forms the roof of the arcades. While the architecture of the church is Gothic in character, there are very few lines of beauty. The Upper Church faces on a *piazza* which is reached by a steep stone stairway from the open space below. The ponderous square campanile rises high above the building, and the long, low monastery with its double tiers of arches stretches away along the mountain side, to all appearances springing out of the rocky soil, and ending abruptly at the edge of the hillside spur. The entrance to the Lower Church, which is really the immense crypt of the Upper Church, is from the lower *piazza*.

Walking through the doorway we feel our way cautiously down a few steps until we reach a broad landing, then pause for a moment, for coming from the bright glare of the noonday sun, our eyes cannot



UPPER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI

From a photograph by Mr. P. B. Eckhart

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

at first penetrate the gloom. But slowly the darkness begins to disappear, and the low heavy arches stretching from side to side are visible, revealing the contour of the church. Advancing further down the aisle, the light from the distant windows discloses the wealth of color on ceiling and walls, somber and subdued 'tis true, but bright enough to bring exclamations of wonder and delight from enthusiastic lips. When the Lower Church was completed the best artists of the day were engaged to decorate its walls, and while much of the work has almost faded away, enough remains to give the keenest enjoyment. There are frescoes by Cimabue, Simone Martini, Buffalmaco, Lorenzetti, and students of the school of Giotto. Over the high altar on the ceiling, are the four famous allegorical paintings by Giotto, his best preserved and most remarkable work, and in the transepts his scenes from the life of Christ. On either side of the nave, tiny chapels are concealed, each bearing the name of a saint—St. Nicholas, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Catherine, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Stephen, St. Martin. These were all decorated, but the frescoes are sadly damaged.

Under the high altar, down a steep flight of marble steps is a large chapel. Its walls, ceiling and pavement are of marble of many rich and beautiful hues. Two great marble statues of popes adorn the stairway, many lamps, swinging gently shed a soft light, and in the center of the chapel is a tomb, protected by strong steel bars, containing what may remain of the material body of the gentle St. Francis of Assisi.

ASSISI

You have doubtless stood with uncovered head, and looked down upon that great sarcophagus of stone which holds the remains of Napoleon. You remember the tattered battle flags, and in imagination you may have heard the tramp of many men, the martial music, the roar of battle, the shouts of victory. We say, and truly, there lies a great man, a mighty leader of men, yet by what a different process did he seek to conquer the world, than that employed by St. Francis of Assisi.

One need not remain very long in the Lower Church without being strangely impressed. It seems like an abode of spirits, and you wonder whether the faint mystical figures all around you on the walls, will not step out of their frescoes and float around you and bless you. Every nook and cranny seems to beckon you to come and explore, and you go peering about in the shadowy corners fearing that you may have passed by a tiny fresco of some sweet-faced saint. We wish, perhaps, that a great flood of light might illumine it all for a moment, but how the gentle saints would shrink from that, for they have never seen the full brightness of an Italian mid-day. So one may walk many times up and down the short nave, back and forth across the narrow transepts, stopping now and then to get some new view of the whole, or to rest awhile on an inviting bench before Cimabue's Madonna, Martini's Santa Chiara, Giotto's Crucifixion, or to watch a lonely artist copying with earnest care Lorenzetti's Virgin and Child.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

A long winding stairway leads to the Upper Church from the sacristy. A great contrast greets us as we enter, for the Gothic windows admit the sunlight from every side. This church is high-vaulted and spacious, the choir stalls are beautiful and the walls of the nave are luminous with Giotto's frescoes, telling the story of St. Francis with remarkable detail. Standing in the choir and looking down the nave, the effect is very lovely, for nothing can surpass Giotto's coloring for harmonious decoration. All the other frescoes in the church are sadly disfigured. Occasionally a graceful figure is visible, alone and detached, and again and again are our spirits saddened by the thought that all this beauty is slowly disappearing.

San Francesco is used very little for religious services; there is no organ; a few priests are in attendance who extend many courtesies to strangers; but it is only far down by the tomb of the saint that one may see a faithful soul kneeling in devotion. An air of solitude pervades this great temple which might be oppressive to those who were not vitally interested in St. Francis or early Umbrian art; and really solitude or loneliness is the ever present Assisan atmosphere, but there is enjoyment walking the quiet, deserted streets, and it is very peaceful lingering in the churches while our spirit broods over the past.

The church of San Damiano, well beloved of St. Francis and St. Clare, is located on the mountain side, a mile or more from the city. The little, old building is well shaded by the olive trees and a high

ASSISI

wall encloses the courtyard in front of the church. The entrance is very low and over it is a tiny rose window, and the window where St. Clare stood with the Holy Sacrament in her hands when the Saracens were scaling the walls of the convent, which holy vision caused them to flee in fear. A faded fresco around this window still tells the story.

San Damiano was intimately associated with St. Francis in the early days of his conversion. It was the place of struggle when his spirit was filled with unrest, and the peace which he was seeking became his possession one day as he knelt in the little chapel before the crucifix and heard Christ speak to him, calling him to his life work.

The interior is dim and very bare. There are many small rooms formerly the stone cells of the nuns; the doorways are so low that one must stoop to enter. The floor is worn and uneven; there are steps to climb or steps to descend all worn deep and smooth. The edifice is sacred to the memory of St. Clare, and one is permitted to look only through latticed apertures into the refectory and the dormitory where she died. Her little oratory is safely guarded, and so is her garden, six feet square with high walls about it. The small chapel is dark, the walls rough, with low-vaulted ceiling; there are confessional booths, and an altar in the choir. San Damiano is impressive and satisfying, it is so plain and simple, and the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare seems to find us and touch us more deeply there, than in the great churches of San Francesco and Santa Maria degli Angeli.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

On the way back to the city we pass the church of St. Clare, a huge structure with heavy buttresses on one side forming an arcade. When this church was built, San Damiano was abandoned by the "Poor Clares," and the body of the saint and the sacred crucifix were removed thither. The interior of the church is bare and gloomy. There are faint outlines of frescoes on the walls, of the school of Giotto and the Sienese artists. The most interesting portion of the church is the chapel of San Giorgio where St. Francis was first buried. The walls are decorated with frescoes by artists of the Umbrian school and are very quaint. The tomb of St. Clare in a chapel below is tawdry and the representation of her body too realistic.

One could spend many days wandering about Assisi and its environs. In the Roman portion of the old town is the Cathedral of San Rufino and the ancient Temple of Minerva. The massive ruins of the fortress look inviting, and the long climb up steep Mt. Subasio we are sure would bring a rich reward to the toiler when he beheld the vision of the wondrous valley at his feet. Then there are innumerable strolls down the mountain side to the Carceri Convent, one of the haunts of St. Francis, and to Rivo Torto, one of the earliest homes of the Franciscans.

We read of Assisi: "It is a city of the dead, of memories only." In the early years of St. Francis, the city was rich and powerful, offering diversion to troubadours and knights seeking romantic adventure. But Assisi was not to live in history by the

ASSISI

deeds of chivalry of her sons, or by the conquest of her rivals. Her real story began one day when a poor monk appeared upon her streets calling her people to repentance. Thereafter her history was to be interwoven with that of St. Francis and her chief glory was to come to her from association with his name.

SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD



CHAPTER IV

SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD

This short treatise has not been written as an APOLOGY for the saints. Realizing that some of the pages of this book may be read by many with incredulity, I have inserted it with the hope that it may throw some light on this important subject, and enable us to have an open mind at least toward certain teachings of the Catholic religion.

Scoffers at the saints are not confined to those outside the church, indeed the orthodox Christian of the Protestant church has little sympathy for them. He sometimes uses the phrase in speaking of some good departed soul, "she was a saint," but fails to recognize the deeper significance of it, and altogether rejects the psychic phenomena and miracles attributed to the saints.

Do not let us place them on pedestals, let us remember that they were human beings like ourselves, with the same original endowments. Some one has said that "when the saints are set before us rather as wonderful than lovable; when we have no conception of the process of their spiritual evolution, how from rudiments of sanctity which are in us all, and by the aid of resources and faculties which we all possess, they obtained a result so different; until we have learnt to set aside all that is merely the clothing and expression of sanctity, and to find that the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

underlying substance is simply the love of God and of things divine carried to an heroic degree; we cannot expect to gain much definite profit from the study of saint's lives."

This quotation would lead us to believe that we all once had for a possession this "rudiment of sanctity," but that only a very few had cultivated the tiny flower until it brought forth the blossom.

Saints and Sainthood considered literally, belong to the centuries long passed, the idea being quite contrary to modern thought and opinion. They were the product of an age and condition which does not now exist, and that the saint was a product or species, and that sainthood was a calling or profession is stoutly maintained and developed in an interesting way by Mons. H. Joly, a Frenchman, in his little book, entitled, "The Psychology of the Saints."

He writes that the idea of sanctity or holiness has prevailed in every religion; that there have always been seekers after holiness and that many have acquired this distinction through the conscientious practice of their particular beliefs. There were Buddhist, Confucian and Mohammedan, as well as Christian saints. They attained their high calling by patient struggle, and we should honor them, but the ideals of the Christian saint were higher than the others for they penetrated deeper into the needs of life and were not satisfied to stop when sanctity was secured, for then the saintly life was but begun.

This subject is very elusive, and battling against the scepticism of the practical man is no mean task. He affirms that the saint is weak-minded, bigoted,

SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD

puerile, superstitious and ignorant. A careful study will soon controvert this statement. The saints were men and women of high intelligence and strong personality; many were deep thinkers, students of the conditions of the times, and leaders of thought both scientific and economic. In fact, they would have been quite disqualified if to their purity, had not been added the virtues of learning and experience, and it has been affirmed that every aspirant must possess prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice in a marked degree. Yet, while having won these virtues, many of them attained sainthood only after passing through fiery waters of sin and degradation, after overcoming passion, greed, selfishness and lust, and all the weaknesses to which flesh is heir.

All this confirms the real humanity of the saints, and they were very human; but as there are men in other professions who stand head and shoulders above their fellows, so the saints are the great ones of the church, living not the religious life alone, but also the sanctified life.

This life of sanctity was not necessarily a somber existence; it did not mean a withdrawal from secular activities, neither did it signify a diminishing of personality. We have only to read of St. Francis of Assisi to be assured of that, and again of that sweet character, the most modern of all saints, Joan of Arc, of whom it has been written: "Joan of Arc is no blind and passive instrument of a supernatural power. An exterior intelligence does not take the place of her intelligence, or an exterior will of her will. The Deliverer of France is not a composite

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

being, the dwelling place for the moment of foreign powers. Joan knows that she possesses a very clearly defined personality of her own. She insists upon that fact and she proves the truth of her claim by the independence of her decisions and actions, and by the resistance she occasionally offers to the guidance of her Voices."

When we come to consider the extraordinary phenomena which occur in the lives and experiences of the saints we are filled with amazement. These visions, ecstasies, miraculous powers! whence came they? Are they the imaginings of diseased minds, of feeble bodies, or the products of hysteria? Let us not confuse these gifts with ordinary clairvoyance or hypnotism; they were far greater possessions which could be bestowed only upon those who were living the sanctified life, and they were too sacred to be used save in the moments of their richest experiences.

The canonization of holy men and women as saints is one of the sacred tenets of the Catholic church, and the inestimable value and rareness of its bestowment testifies to the reverence with which it is regarded. Great wisdom too, has been shown in its use, for the recipients of the honor have been almost without exception, of noble life and unblemished character.

"The Catholic church canonizes or beatifies only those whose lives have been marked by the exercise of heroic virtue, and only after this has been proved by common repute for sanctity and by conclusive arguments. The chief difference, however, lies in the meaning of the term canonization, the church seeing in the saints nothing more than friends and

SAINTS AND SAINTHOOD

servants of God whose holy lives have made them worthy of His special love.

The true origin of canonization and beatification must be sought in the Catholic doctrine of the worship, invocation and intercession of the saints. As was taught by St. Augustine, Catholics, while giving to God alone adoration, strictly so-called, honor the saints because of the divine, supernatural gifts which have earned them eternal life. The church erects altars to God alone though in honor of and in memory of saints and martyrs."

The pope alone has the authority to canonize, and the process or examination of the candidate for sainthood is conducted as follows:

Choosing of vice-postulator to promote judicial inquiries.

Inquiry regarding the reputation for sanctity and miracles, also the writings of the candidate.

The results of these are sent to Rome.

The papers are opened, translated into Italian, and a cardinal is deputed to have charge of the case.

The writings are revised by theologians.

All the documents are printed and distributed forty days before the date of the discussion.

If no objections are made action is ordered.

A final meeting is held and the cause discussed.

The pope signs the decree.

Formula.—In honor of. we decree and define that Blessed. is a Saint and we inscribe his name in the catalogue of saints and order that his memory be devoutly and piously celebrated yearly on the day. his feast.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI



CHAPTER V

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The story of St. Francis of Assisi is like a thread of gold woven through a dark tapestry, the beauty of his life being intensified by the strong contrast of its surroundings. We must never think of him as alien to the times in which he lived, or as a stranger to the conditions. He was born at a psychological moment. He was needed and he came. Quietly and unheralded he steps forth from a gloomy background to begin his work of reformation. Let us remember too that he was to a certain extent, the product of the cloister and monastery, that he lived in a superstitious day, and that the church though strong in its cohesive power, was rent by many heresies and schisms. The common people knew little of the scriptures; very few of them could read or write, and the benefits of education were just beginning to be realized among the higher classes.

There was no such word as Fraternity in the vocabulary of the twelfth century. Every man's hand was raised against his neighbor; class was arrayed against class; party against party. The common man was forced into a servitude of hatred, attaching himself to victorious noble or party, returning perhaps to his toil in the field when days of peace came, only to be crushed by taxation so grievous that his life became a struggle for existence.

[III]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Born in this turbulent period of a family of the better class, Francis lived the years of his youth carelessly and thoughtlessly, but the time came when the tenderness of his heart and the chivalry of his nature were aroused and the power of his life, overflowing with love and service, went forth to give battle to the lust and hatred which were destroying the souls of his fellow-men.

I wish I had the power to call up a vivid image of this personality, to present St. Francis to you in an impressive way. Approach the story, if you will, reverently and without scepticism, otherwise it will be difficult to reconcile the sweet simplicity of it with the prosaic common sense of the present day.

The lives of the saints, more than any others, are enshrouded in mystery, and as their day of existence recedes, the illusion increases, and we read many strange tales about them. St. Francis was no exception to this rule, and it is quite difficult to discriminate between legend and truth, but the careful student of his life will be impressed with its continuity and the almost inevitable sequence of its events.

His story has been most beautifully told by a Frenchman, M. Paul Sabatier, and an eminent critic has said, that although the writer was a Frenchman and a Protestant, his heart had turned Franciscan. "One cannot frequent the society of the blessed with impunity. It is perilous to live in close communion with saintliness unless we would become holy." Sabatier has spent many spring times in Assisi. He has visited again and again the haunts of the saint;

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

has had access to the carefully preserved manuscripts and records in Italian libraries; he has mingled with the priests and people of Umbria; and gaining his information from original sources, has given to the world the most convincing and appealing life of St. Francis that has been written. The sweet character of the saint pervades its pages, and although the writer is not in entire sympathy with the Catholic church, he gives full credence to the mystical and miraculous occurrences in the saint's life which might by the Protestant be considered legendary.

I have read the book many times, and my estimate of St. Francis has been largely influenced by what Sabatier has written and therefore will be reflected in these pages. They will contain little that is original and less that is critical; events will not always be given in chronological order; the story will be related with simplicity, my impressions with sincerity.

If a belated pedestrian had been passing the house of Pietro Bernardone in Assisi on a certain evening of May in the year 1200, he would have been startled at the sound of boisterous gaiety; and if he had been curious enough to linger for a few moments, he would have seen a band of young men rushing out the door into the dark street. They were richly dressed in the fantastic costumes of the period, sons of noblemen by appearance, full of exuberant life. In spite of the lateness of the hour, they marched

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

up the narrow thoroughfare singing their troubadour songs, calling down upon their heads the imprecations of their more sober and sleepy neighbors. Woe to the night-watch if he should meet them, he would have to nurse his broken pate the next day, and mourn the loss of pike and lantern.

We shall not follow them through the night of carousal and dissipation, nor linger until they return home as dawn is appearing. This is but one of many nights spent in like manner by this fast young set of Assisi.

Naturally this band of revelers must have a leader, and it would not be difficult to choose him from among them. He was a young man of twenty, slender, graceful, of medium height, dark eyes, rather pale complexion, with an abundance of black hair. His costume was the richest of all the little group; he was the most vivacious, the most debonair, the beloved favorite of those dissolute young Umbrians. His voice led all their songs, his laughter their jokes, and his full purse was always responding to their wants at the numerous wine-shops. His name you have already surmised, Francesco Bernardone, otherwise Francis of Assisi, not the saint, but the sinner.

Francis was born in Assisi in 1182. His father Pietro was a well-to-do silk merchant, his mother Pica a gentle, refined spirit. Pietro purchased many of his silks in France, and on one of his journeys returned with his bride, Pica, a fair woman of Provence. Francis was born while his father was absent in France, and was christened Giovanni, but

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

upon his father's return the name was changed at his request to Francesco or Francis.

There were few, if any, schools in Italy in that day, so the lad grew up receiving only a meager education. The priests taught him Latin, and he may have learned French from his mother.

Thomas of Celano, in his first life of St. Francis, accuses parents of the time of wilfully corrupting the morals of their children. No such charge has been made against the parents of Francis, but he received little religious or moral training and was allowed to choose his course without restraint. Every whim was granted by his father, whose vanity was pleased when he saw his son's companionship sought by the young noblemen. He was well supplied with money and encouraged in all kinds of dissipation. His home became the rendezvous of the gayest and most reckless young men of the town. His attitude toward the church was careless indifference, his idea of life self-indulgence and enjoyment.

His father made an effort to teach him his trade and Francis became a salesman in the silk shop; but this was too serious for him, he did not love work, the excitement of the street was more to his taste, and he never hesitated to leave his task when anything more interesting called him.

Thus he lived for twenty years, careless, light-hearted and free, with hardly a serious view of life. But with all his faults he was not thoroughly bad; he possessed many good qualities which were never entirely debased. He had a happy disposition, a high sense of honor, and a loving heart, each of

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

which virtues is a saintly qualification. No one in distress ever sought his help in vain, and his compassion often persuaded him to empty his purse in the palm of some poor wretch begging in the street.

His misguided life met with its first check near the close of the year 1202. Assisi became embroiled in a quarrel with the neighboring city of Perugia. In the contest which followed, the Assisians were defeated and Francis taken prisoner. He remained in exile a year, and while presumably under some restraint, suffered no discomfort, rather enjoying the novel experience.

I am convinced that he spent some days in contemplation during this period, although on his return to Assisi he sought his old companions and resumed his life of dissipation to such an extent, that his body at last broke down under the strain and he became grievously ill. His sickness was long and severe, and before he recovered, the seriousness of life had entered into his heart. Sabatier tells us of his first walk out of doors, describing the condition of his mind and body.

"He was regaining strength little by little and had begun to go about the house, when one day he felt the desire to walk abroad to contemplate nature quietly, and so take hold again of life. Leaning on a stick he bent his steps toward the city gate. The nearest one, called Porta Nuova, is the very one which opens upon the finest scenery. Immediately on passing through it, one finds one's self in the open country; a fold of the hill hides the city and

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

cuts off every sound that might come from it. Before you lies the winding road to Foligno; at the left the imposing mass of Mt. Subasio; at the right the Umbrian plain with its farms, its villages, its cloud-like hills, on whose slopes, pines, cedars, oaks, the vine and the olive-tree shed abroad an incomparable brightness and animation. The whole country sparkles with beauty, a beauty harmonious and thoroughly human.

"Francis had hoped by this sight to recover the delicious sensations of his youth. With the sharpened sensibilities of the convalescent, he breathed in the odors of the spring-time, but spring-time did not come, as he had expected, to his heart. This smiling nature had for him only a message of sadness. He had believed that the breezes of this country side would carry away the last shudders of the fever, and instead he felt in his heart a discouragement a thousand-fold more painful than any physical ill. The miserable emptiness of his life suddenly appeared before him; he was terrified at his solitude. Memories of the past assailed him with intolerable bitterness; he was seized with a disgust of himself, his former ambitions seemed to him ridiculous or despicable. He went home overwhelmed with the weight of a new suffering."

How vivid is this picture and how inexpressibly sad! Thus far we have known Francis only as a buoyant spirit, a light-hearted Italian boy; how different is this sick man with weak body and pale face, leaning upon his cane, his heart full of bitterness, groping in the darkness, finding no one to take

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

his hand and lead him into the light. Yet in this very attitude there was hope, for the soul-life was being awakened.

Upon his recovery, no solution of his unrest coming to him, he again entered into all kinds of excesses, but there were days when he was seized with melancholy, when companionship became unendurable, and he desired to be alone.

Bonaventura relates that one day as he was walking, arrayed in a rich costume, he met a soldier poorly clad, and insisted on giving him his cloak. That night he had a dream and saw a beautiful palace full of arms and military vestments marked with the Cross of Christ, and a voice said that they belonged to him and his soldiers. While under this influence he joined the forces of Conte Gentile, who was under service to Walter de Brienne, but he was taken ill at Spoleto and stayed there for several days. Bonaventura thinks that it was at this time that he first received the call to be a soldier of God and not a soldier of fortune, and that he returned to his home changed, but struggling against fate. Shortly after, on one of his night revels, the vision came again, and he stopped in the street, remaining until missed by his companions. They found him lost in thought and spell-bound, and laughingly asked him if he was in love. He replied, "Truly have ye spoken, for that I thought of taking unto me a wife nobler, richer, and fairer than ever ye have seen." With cries of derision his companions forsook him, and he was left alone, never to join again in their frolics.



ST. FRANCIS RENOUNCES HIS FATHER

Fresco by Giotto in the Upper Church

*From a photograph by
courtesy of Alinari*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The days and weeks which followed were given over to the contemplation of the life of Christ. He absented himself, walking through the forests, hiding in caves, heaping reproaches upon himself and grieving over his unworthiness. His thoughts in his melancholy condition dwelt most upon the Passion of Jesus, forming that impression upon his life which grew to such deep significance in after years. By secret visitations to priests in the neighborhood, he frequently added to his meager knowledge, until the power and beauty of the Christ life were fully revealed to him, and the desire to be like Him filled his thoughts night and day.

His conversion was as real and vital as life itself, but inasmuch as he had wandered far away, the journey back was long and weary. We cannot know the details of the months of struggle. We are told that the burden of his past life was slowly lifted, yet he always believed himself to be the chief of sinners and most unworthy of forgiveness.

The religion of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries brought little comfort even to the saints. The impression seemed to prevail that man's body was the cause of all sin, so it must be put under complete subjection by fastings, scourgings and penances of every kind. For spiritual enlightenment one had to choose a corrupt church or a monastery, and I fear that the thought of the love and mercy of God seldom entered within the walls of either. I doubt very much whether Francis at this time had a clearer conception of this truth than others of his day, for he was an object of pity as he emerged from his

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

seclusion and declared his intention of renouncing the world.

His conversion brought consternation to his family. His father was a man of the world and had other plans for his son. Francis, bereft of the confidential relationship which should exist between father and son, doubtless kept secret for a time the struggle through which he was passing, until one day, in his eager impetuosity, he abstracted some money from his father's cash box, and gave it to the priests for the restoration of a small chapel. When this was discovered his father's anger was uncontrollable. He was subjected to the most heartless treatment, to insults and abuse which he bore with resignation. Pitied by his mother and despised by his father, he visited his home but infrequently, spending his time in an obscure place, where with a priest, he worked with his hands repairing a broken down church.

Meanwhile his body grew emaciated, and his appearance on the streets of Assisi was greeted with derision. Coming in contact with his father one day in a public square, in the presence of many people, he was disowned and cast off forever. Quietly and without a word of anger Francis disrobed, laying his clothes at his father's feet, and said, "Listen, all of you, and understand it well; until this time I have called Pietro Bernardone my father, from henceforth I desire to say nothing else than 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"

He found a place of refuge in the little worn out chapel of San Damiano, on one of the hillsides near

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Assisi, where he spent many weeks in contemplation and prayer until his life became wholly consecrated. One day, in the year 1209, while attending mass, Francis heard these words read: "Wherever ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. Provide neither silver nor gold, nor brass in your purses, neither scrip nor two coats, nor shoes nor staff, for the laborer is worthy of his meat."

Softly the intoned words fell from the lips of the priest, and floating gently down through the dim atmosphere of the chapel, found lodgment in his heart. He thought the words were spoken to him by Jesus, Himself. Trembling with emotion he arose; with every breath came new inspiration; the message ran through his veins like fire until his whole being was aflame. It was his great joy to answer the call, and so began the life work of St. Francis of Assisi.

He commenced preaching immediately in his native city. Two years had elapsed since he had withdrawn himself from the world. His former companions had forsaken him. He had been well known and his renunciation had caused much wonderment in the minds of the people. His attitude of humility during the struggle with his father had won the sympathy of many, and all were curiously eager to hear him.

How startling must have been the change in his personal appearance as he stood before his old friends and neighbors! They remembered him as the gay young troubadour singing in the streets with

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

his rich companions. They hardly recognized him in the simple cloak and hood of the monk, the freshness of his face all gone, his body shrunken by a too abstemious life.

Francis of Assisi was not a theologian. His message to the people was a call to repentance and higher living. He spoke out of his own life's experience, and they did not question his sincerity. His hearers were deeply moved as he preached day after day in the cathedral, and not a few sought him out, offering themselves and all they possessed, for the enlargement of his work.

It may be interesting at this point in his career, to get a glimpse of his outward appearance, and no better picture of him exists than that given by his contemporary, Thomas of Celano.

"He was of moderate height, inclining to shortness. His head was of ordinary size, and round; his face was long, with prominent features, his brow narrow and smooth; his eyes were fair-sized, black and frank; his hair dark, his eyebrows straight; his nose thin, well-formed, and straight; his ears were erect and small, and his temples smooth; his speech was persuasive, fiery and pointed; his voice eager, sweet, clear and musical; his teeth were close-set, even and white, his lips small and thin; his beard was black and not very full; his neck was slender, his shoulders erect, his arms short, his hands thin, the fingers long, with long nails; his legs were thin, and his feet small; his skin was delicate and he had very little flesh." Clothe this figure in the long habit of the Franciscan Order, sometimes grey,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

sometimes brown; with the pointed hood, which is worn over the head or hangs down behind; a cord about the waist; sandals on the feet, although sometimes bare; and we have the description complete.

No intimation had yet come to Francis that he was to be a great teacher and founder of an Order, but in spite of himself, he speedily attracted a few earnest spirits. In the early days of his conversion he had taken the vow of poverty. Henceforth for him, there was to be no such word as possession; he literally "left all and followed Him." He admitted none to his fellowship who differed with him in this exaggerated view of life. His converts called themselves *Fratres Minores* (little brothers) for in their deep humility they believed themselves to be the least among men. This little band became very devoted to one another, spending the hours together in sweet communion; Christ and His life were their constant themes of conversation, and they often returned from their daily walk among the hills, their faces shining with ecstasy.

Of the many who came flocking to the standard of St. Francis, there were those who grew to be his intimate friends, advisers and constant companions. Among them were men of wealth, of superior intelligence and executive ability. They freely cast their gifts and wealth aside that there should be no hindrance to their service; they were rare examples of humility, devotion and love, and their affiliation with Francis brought cheer into his rather somber existence. They were men from various walks in

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

life, dwellers in Assisi and thereabouts, who by their influence added much stability to the order in its opening days.

These men with few exceptions were chivalrous by nature, remaining true to the Franciscan ideal. Much has been written of them and we shall meet them frequently in the coming pages.

Bernardo di Quintavalle was the first chosen companion. He was a magistrate of Assisi, doubtless had known Francis always, and looked with suspicion upon him in his new role. But he had been so impressed that he resolved to investigate. Accordingly, he invited him to his house and during the night feigning sleep, watched him pouring his heart out in devotions. The next day he offered himself and all that he possessed. His wealth was distributed to the poor, and donning the cloak and hood, he spent many years of faithful service in the Franciscan Order.

Rufino, another companion, was a man of ascetic tendencies; he was serious, refined and gentle. He was a cousin of St. Clare and a devout Franciscan, although there was always a little reserve about him which Francis could not quite overcome. His life was given to much contemplation, and many misgivings assailed him when he thought of forgiveness as related to the final day of judgment. Francis looked upon him as one of the purest of men worthy to be called a saint.

Now comes "Giles the Ecstatic"—"Blessed Giles"—Egidio—one of the most distinguished of the little band. Returning to Assisi after an absence, he

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

found the town much excited over the strange career of Francis. Here was something that appealed to him, and without hesitation he gave himself unreservedly to the new cause. He was a creature of impulse, never inactive, never weary; he begged for the difficult tasks, and was sent hither and thither to spread the order, often risking his life in distant lands. He was fearless, restless and very practical; he had a remarkable insight and was a good judge of men; he possessed a sharp tongue which he frequently used to pierce the superficiality of his friends.

In later years he limited his journeys to the Umbrian towns. Living in Perugia, the life of an ascetic, he spent much time in thought on holy things often experiencing ecstasies to such a degree, that the Perugians began to look upon him as a saint, and after his death guarded his relics with the utmost care.

Brother Masseo was an interesting character. He had a large, commanding figure, a handsome face, and strange to say, his great longing was for the possession of humility. St. Francis knowing his desire, lost no opportunity to test him, consigning to him the most simple and menial duties of the servant, which he performed with cheerfulness. He was often his chosen companion, being with him in many of the great crises of his life. It is quite possible that the frail personality of Francis found strength as it came in contact with the big, vigorous body of Masseo, and therefore he longed for the companionship; be that as it may, Brother Masseo cared for and loved him tenderly.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Brother Leo reminds us of John, the "beloved disciple;" he was called *pecorello di Dio*, the little sheep of God, for he was always running at his master's side, his "loving shadow." He was St. Francis' secretary and knew him most intimately. He found his greatest joy sitting at his feet, drinking in his words. He listened and remembered well, and to him we owe more than to any other the details of St. Francis' life. He was always in perfect sympathy with Francis, and his spirit was sweet, docile, tender and loving.

Francis doubtless dictated to Leo much of the material that has come down to us, and Leo himself, after the death of Francis, became a writer of prominence. He protested against the innovations introduced into the order, and was strongly opposed to the building of the basilica, which he considered was outraging the principles most dear to the heart of the dead saint.

Leo lived forty-five years after the death of Francis. He never swerved from his allegiance, but the opposition was too strong for him and his last days were sad and lonely. In 1246 he, in company with Brothers Rufino and Angelo, "the three companions," wrote "The Legend of St. Francis," a little book which records simply and intimately many of the events of Francis' life.

One of the greatest treasures in Assisi is a bit of parchment, the blessing of Leo, dictated to Leo and signed by Francis with a cross in the shape of Tau. I looked at it long and earnestly, remembering it was written on Alverna. "God bless and keep thee,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

show thee His countenance, and have mercy on thee, turn His face towards thee, and give thee peace. God bless you, Brother Leo."

We know little of Brother Angelo, save that we are told that he was a soldier, that Francis met him on his way to Rome in 1210, and loving a soldier, spoke these words to him; "Lord Angelo, long time is it now since first you girt on your sword and donned all your warlike armour. Now would it become you to gird you with a rough rope like me; in place of the sword to take the Cross of Christ, and for boots and spurs to shoe you with the dust and mire of the streets. Follow me, then, and I will make you a knight of Christ." Again the personality of Francis broke down all barriers, and Angelo became a Franciscan, one of the most intimate, one of "the three companions."

Of Brother Elias, the most notable companion of all, we shall write later, and at length.

Among the many who went to hear St. Francis in the cathedral, was a young girl of the prominent family of Scifi. Her name was Chiara (or Clare). She was but sixteen years old, had grown up under the best of influences, was refined, gentle, charitable and mystical. Her heart was touched from the very first by the story of the conversion of Francis, and by the fervency and power of his appeals which were stirring the little town from day to day. As time passed she became wholly absorbed with the thought that she must also devote her life to the uplifting of the world. She had but one in whom she could safely confide, her younger sister Agnes, and

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

together the two young maidens talked of the precious secret, seeking some plan for the culmination of their hopes.

Clare finally went to Francis and told him of her desires. He, zealous for his new cause, gave her encouragement, and it was finally agreed that she should leave her father's house on the night of the approaching Palm Sunday. On that day she went to the cathedral with her parents, they not suspecting the struggle that was raging in her heart, yearning though she was to tell them of her decision, yet knowing that they would never give their consent. At night she fled from her home, and with one or two companions hastened to the little Portiuncula in the woods, where Francis awaited her. Her hair was shorn, she was clothed in coarse garments, and in a solemn service of renunciation, gave up her home, her friends and the world. This was the beginning of the Second Order, or "Order of Poor Clares."

The next day her parents and friends came and pleaded with her to return, but with tears and gentle words she told them of her vow, and begged them to follow her. Later her sister Agnes joined her, and after the death of her father, her mother devoted her life to the order.

San Damiano, the church which Francis repaired with his own hands, was set apart as the dwelling place for the women, and it speedily became a center of good deeds. The nuns went about ministering to the sick, supplying the needs of the poor, and supplementing the work in the more gentle and feminine way. The "Order of the Poor Clares"

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

increased rapidly and did much to promote the influence of the Franciscans. St. Clare was deeply loved by the women who joined her, and while she was very rigid with them in the observance of the rules, her personal relationship to them was very tender, like that of a mother to her children. When they were ill, she nursed them, and often on cold winter nights she walked from cot to cot to see if they were warmly covered. In the hour of peril when the city was in danger from foreign invaders and San Damiano itself was the object of attack, she walked bravely out alone carrying the sacred symbols, and the soldiers, looking upon her with awe, withdrew in fear.

St. Clare lived a long and useful life, surviving St. Francis by many years. It is said that "no one else appears to have caught the spirit of St. Francis so completely as St. Clare." She understood him and was entirely in sympathy with his great work. As the years passed her devotion to the cause and its principles was second only to that of St. Francis himself. She grieved with him when dissensions came, and feared not to rebuke the pope, when he offered to release her from her vow of poverty. The fame of her pure life and deeds of charity spread throughout the land; her prayers were answered in a most marvelous way; miraculous power seemed to be given her in healing diseases; and although her body was frail her spirit was indomitable. Her love for St. Francis was pure and uplifting, and while they met only at long intervals, her tender spirit upheld him in hours of trial.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Few characters, even among the saints, have fought so valiant a fight as St. Clare. For forty years she held aloft the banner of the Franciscans after their leader was gone and the cause was waning. When she died the great men of the church and the poor of the city came to do her honor, and August 11, 1255, her name was placed on the Calendar of the Saints by Alexander IV.

Very little has been written of the friendship existing between St. Francis and St. Clare, but nowhere has this relationship been set forth more exquisitely than in "The Little Flowers of St. Francis."

"How Saint Clare ate with Saint Francis in
Saint Mary of the Angels."

"Saint Francis, at Assisi sojourning,
Would visit oft Saint Clare, and unto her
Give holy admonitions. Now she had
A strong desire for once to eat with him,
And to that end besought him many a time.
But ne'er that solace would he grant her.
For which cause his companions, when they saw
Saint Clare's desire, unto Saint Francis said:
'Father, we deem this sternness sorteth not
With heavenly charity, that to Sister Clare,
A maid so saintly and by God beloved,
Thou should'st hearken in a thing so slight
As to eat bread with thee, and that the more,
Seeing that through thy preaching she renounced
The riches and the splendour of the world.

[131]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Yea, in good sooth, a greater grace than this,
And she had asked thee, wert thou bound to do
Unto thy spiritual plant.' Thereat
Replied Saint Francis: 'Think ye that I ought
To grant it?' His companions answered him:
'Yea Father, meet and right it is that thou
Do her this solace.' Then Saint Francis said:
'Since so to you, so seems it then to me;
And, more to comfort her, I will this feast
Be in Saint Mary of the Angels held;
Since at Saint Damian's for so long a time
She hath been cloistered, that 'twill gladden her
To look a little on St. Mary's House,
Where she was shorn, and unto Jesus Christ
Espoused; there let us eat then in God's name
Together.' And when the appointed day was
come,
Saint Clare from out her Convent issuing,
With one companion, and accompanied
By the companions of Saint Francis came
Thus to Saint Mary of the Angels, where,
Her salutation to Maid Mary given
Before the shrine where she was shorn and veiled
To view the house they led her, till such hour
As they should dine. Saint Francis therewithal
On the bare ground, the while, let spread the
board,
As was his wont; and when the hour was come,
They set them down, Saint Francis and Saint
Clare
Together, and, with St. Clare's companion, one
Of the Companions of Saint Francis; then

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Who yet remained did range them at the board
Right humbly. And behold! at the first dish,
Saint Francis 'gan so sweetly speak of God
In words so wondrous, that, the overflow
Of grace divine descending from on high
Upon them, one and all were rapt in God;
And while they were thus rapt, with eyes and
hands

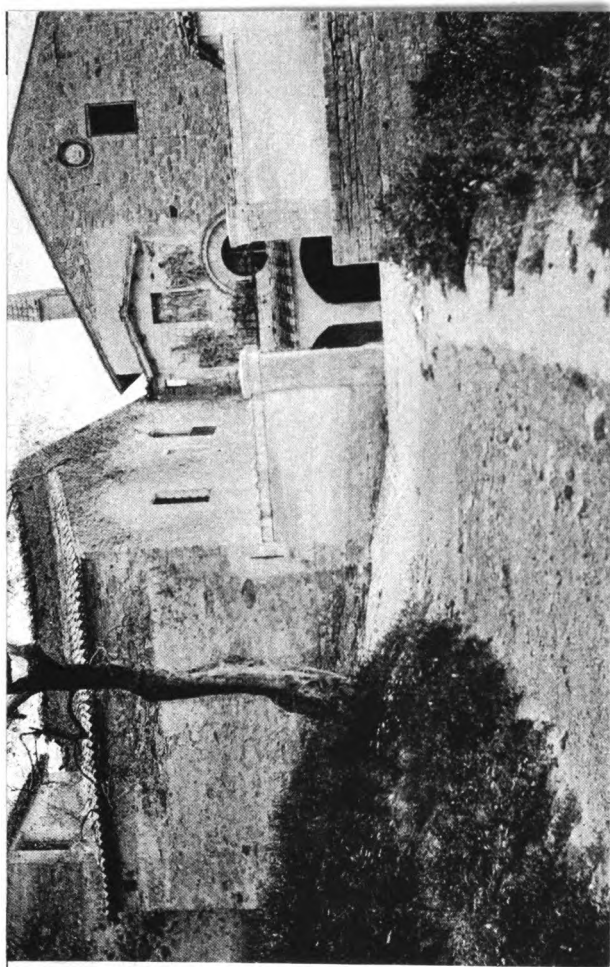
Upraised to heaven, those of Assisi's town,
Bettona, and the country round about,
Beheld Saint Mary of the Angels—all
The House, and the wood near it—burning bright;
And there appeared as 'twere a mighty fire,
That did the Church, the House, the forest, fill;
Whereat the Assisians gat them at great speed
Thither to quench it, thinking the whole place
Was fiercely blazing. But, arrived at the House,
And finding there no fire, they entered it,
And saw Saint Francis and Saint Clare, and all
Their company, so sitting, rapt in God,
In contemplation round that humble board,
Whence understood they of a truth that that
Had not been earthly, but celestial fire,
Miraculously sent by God to shew
And symbolize the fire of love divine.
Whereby those holy Brothers, holy Nuns
Were soul-enkindled; and they went their way
Much comforted. A long time afterward,
Saint Francis, and Saint Clare, and all the rest,
Returning to themselves, and feeling sweet
Refreshment from that spiritual food,
Gave but scant heed unto the body's fare.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

And so Saint Clare, this blest refection done,
Back to Saint Damian with good escort hied;
And seeing her, the Sisters were right glad,
For they feared Saint Francis sending her
To rule some other Convent, as ere now
Her holy sister Agnes had been sent
To rule in Florence o'er the Sisterhood
Of Monticelli; and Saint Francis once
Had said to her: 'Be ready, if need were
I sent thee to some other House:' and she
Of holy Obedience a daughter true,
Made answer: 'Father send me where thou wilt,
Ready am I to go.' And therefore now,
Much joyed the Sisters to receive her back;
And therewithal Saint Clare from that time forth
Remained much solaced."

It is a lovely walk along the mountain side of Subasio through the woods to San Damiano, the peaceful home of St. Clare and her attendants. Her presence seems to pervade the atmosphere, as we go down the narrow aisle and up the worn stone stairs. We sit thoughtfully in the crumbling stalls in the chapel, then have just a glimpse of her oratory, and a few moments in her tiny garden, where doubtless she entertained St. Francis.

Selincourt suggests that she could look out on the city and see her father's house from which she had fled, and in another direction the town of Spello, which brings to mind one of the legends of the shepherds concerning these two sweet spirits.



CHURCH OF SAN DAMIANO, ASSISI
From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“One day when Francis and Clare were going to Vallegloria to visit the convent there, they went to the inn at Spello to get some food. Now the people in the inn began to talk together, discussing the two companions and saying that it was a scandal for a man and woman who were not married always to go about together, under veil of holiness. And they did not hide their displeasure from Francis and Clare, and Francis humbly asked them for something to eat. Now it was a Friday, and the people of the house, willing to put him to shame, set before him a fowl. So Francis was set between two rules, the rule of the Church which forbade him to eat flesh on Friday, and the rule of his Order, which forbade him to refuse anything which was set before him. And whilst the people of the house were enjoying his dilemma, Francis made a sign of the Cross over the fowl, and immediately it flew away and a fish took its place. And when they had eaten they left the place. But when they were come to the cemetery outside Spello, they began to talk together of what had happened. And they were heavy-hearted at the report spread concerning them. And Clare wept in great sorrow that such things should be said, and complained of men’s impurity and dullness. And Francis was sad, too, but he said: ‘My little sister, it is plain that we must consider the weakness of men, and not go on this journey together.’ And Clare knelt before him and said: ‘My father, tell me what to do.’ And Francis said, ‘Go back to San Damiano and I will go back to the Portiuncula, and we will live separately.’ So Clare went silently and sadly

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

on her way, and Francis walked with slow and heavy steps through the wood to the Portiuncula. But he had not gone far when he heard Clare calling gently after him: 'Brother Francis, brother Francis!' and he turned to meet her. And she said, 'You did not put a limit to our parting. When shall we meet again?' And Francis answered in some confusion: 'When the roses flower on Mount Subasio.' Now it was mid-winter, and the snow lay thick upon the ground. And Clare turned back again on her way. But when she had gone a few steps, the snow began to break away around her, and the green briar bushes pushed through it, covered with fragrant summer roses. And Clare filled her apron with them and ran again after Francis, calling to him as before. And when he saw the roses he was filled with joy, and kissed Clare his sister. And from that time forth they were never parted from each other, but lived always together, seeing the blessing of God on their companionship."

We would love to believe in the truth of this sweet story, but the facts are otherwise, and we cannot help grieving when we learn that during his last illness Francis sent for Lady Giacoma di Settisoli of Rome, whom he had met when visiting the pope, and who had done much for the Franciscan Order. It is said that St. Clare was ill herself at the same time, and that the funeral procession passed down by the way of San Damiano, that she might say a last farewell.

* * *

It was clearly demonstrated within a short time to Francis and his followers, that the people were

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

hungering for a reformation in the church and for a more intimate knowledge of the Christian religion. This desire for truth had given rise to numerous heresies which, in France, had been crushed out of existence only by bloody massacres and executions. In Italy, it was admitted by a high dignitary that the Catholic church was in danger of disintegration.

The printing press did not come until two hundred years later, and books were scarce. The few that existed were hand-printed, in possession of the priests. The common people were ignorant, depending upon the faithless servants of the church for their only inspiration for intellectual and moral life. Saint Francis came to them as a messenger from Heaven. His words awakened within them new hopes and longings, and almost before he realized it, he found himself the greatest reformer of the age, and the founder of the Franciscan Order.

Although this movement was distinctly a religious one, it became an evangel of light in many ways, for it sent its missionaries everywhere throughout the civilized world. "Awake thou that sleepest!" was its cry. The words seemed to be vibrating in the air and stirring the hearts of men. St. Francis may rightly be called the forerunner of the Renaissance in Italy, because he awoke the conscience of man which had long been sleeping, and with the awakening, came a desire for light.

"At his (St. Francis') birth art was wedded to the rites of what religion there was, and was equally dead. It had no action, nor composition, nor feeling, and never revealed a truth, or told a story. The

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

subjects were set; there were only the Christ, the Madonna and the saints, robed orientally like sovereigns, seated on oriental thrones. Shortly after his death came Cimabue and Giotto. What he preached they began to paint. Art reborn longed to tell the story of the life of Jesus. The Madonna, as the incarnation of maternal love, began to mount toward her present pedestal. And when the great church was erected as his sepulchre, there flocked to it the artists to whom his teachings must have been an inspiration, to worship at his shrine, and lay their offerings over all its walls in living lines of beauty."

And as in Art, so, too, in literature. For soon came Dante, poet and statesman, "the first Italian," and stirred the world with his majestic lines. Petrarch, too, tuning his lyre to the sweet song of love, and Boccaccio with mirthful, happy prose. Surely the light has dawned at last, never more to wane.

As I have said, St. Francis was no theologian, neither was the Franciscan Order governed by any system of theology, or established on the basis of any creed. Love was its theme, and the revival which it brought to pass, "was the invasion of the realm of religious thought by emotion. It was the advent of tenderness into a sad and dreary universe."

The formation of the order was very simple, the members being obliged to subscribe to certain rules, nearly all of which were taken from the sayings of Jesus. Its foundation was Renunciation. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me."

This rule was literally enforced. All that his followers possessed was distributed among the poor. They even begged their own bread from house to house, they wore the coarsest of garments, the long brown cloak and hood, with sandals on their feet. They built for themselves rude huts for shelter, and when on their journeys slept in the open fields when uninvited to partake of hospitality.

"You must work without money and be poor; you must work without pleasure and be chaste; you must work according to orders and be obedient."

The rigid enforcement of this rule became the bone of bitter strife and contention in later years, and ultimately caused a division in the order. It was not unsuitable for Francis and his first few converts, but as the organization grew in numbers, it sent out into the world a vast army of mendicants who had no means of livelihood, being entirely dependent upon charity. While it is true that they were instructed to earn their bread and shelter by manual labor as far as possible, they were often misunderstood and subjected to insults and persecutions.

As one reads the history of the first few months of the order, one almost wishes that it might have remained in its primitive state of simplicity. Its faithful servants were filled with but one desire, to carry comfort and love to the weary and sad; even the lepers, shunned by all mankind, living apart in their misery, were visited and their sufferings alleviated.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

And it was very beautiful when the day's work was done, to see St. Francis' followers gather about him to receive his instructions, and listen to his gentle words of encouragement. As the order expanded, however, this intimacy must needs cease, for complexities arose with its growth. Opinions of government clashed, opposition appeared, rules were modified. The movement spread into other lands, numbering among its adherents men of fame, even popes and kings, and a great religious organization with all its ramifications, succeeded the little band whose rules of living had been so simple. Its growth was very rapid. It was popular, for it ministered to the common people. It did not scold or denounce, it entreated and besought, its tone was gentle and pleading. Men scoffed at first at the monks with their poverty-vows, but were later convinced of their sincerity, for their lives were perfectly consistent. Their preaching was reformatory, directed against the existing evils, and the order drew to itself many who were at variance with the church.

Naturally the first opposition came from the local priests of the established church. They did not regard the new movement with animosity, but disapproved of the methods. By what authority did these Franciscans preach? They had not been ordained by any church. And how strange was their belief, and unlearned their preaching! How absurd to think that Jesus expected his followers to accept his words literally!

Francis was far-sighted enough to know that conflict would be inevitable, and therefore determined to

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

go to the pope and ask his sanction and approval of the rules of the order. He went to Rome accompanied by eleven of his followers, and through the kindly offices of the Bishop of Assisi, who was there at the time, and the Cardinal Giovanni di San Paolo, he was given an audience with Pope Innocent III.

This event must always be an interesting one historically, because it brought together two men who were to exert a great influence over Italy, and even beyond the confines of the peninsula. Innocent III was most powerful. He was pope eighteen years, and during that period established the complete supremacy of the church over the state. He deposed kings, adjusted royal differences, and exacted tribute from far-away England for daring to question his appointments.

The contrast between the pope on his throne and the "little poor man" from Assisi kneeling before him, must have been very great.

Francis told the story of the establishment of the order, asking nothing for himself, emphasizing its unique foundation resting upon poverty as expressed in the words of Jesus, and humbly imploring that they might be allowed to continue their benevolences and preaching, with no other creed. The pope was patient, but skeptical, and not altogether sincere in his reply, which though given at random, proved to be somewhat prophetic. "My dear children," he said, "your life appears to me too severe. I see, indeed, that your fervor is too great for any doubt of you to be possible, but I ought to consider those

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

who shall come after you, lest your mode of life should be beyond their strength."

In the discussion which followed, some of the cardinals expressed the opinion that the mode of life of the Franciscans "was entirely beyond human power," to which Giovanni di San Paolo replied, "If we hold that to observe gospel perfection and make profession of it is an irrational and impossible innovation, are we not convicted of blasphemy against Christ, the author of the Gospel?"

These arguments are interesting, inasmuch as they reflect the attitude, not only of the church of the thirteenth, but also of the twentieth century. We would not dare to apply the teachings of the sermon on the mount to present-day conditions, yet I honestly believe that they contain the only solution of our most perplexing problems.

It is said that one night while Francis was in Rome, the pope dreamed a dream in which the walls of the Lateran about to fall, were supported on the shoulders of the saint, and sending for him the next morning granted his request. This may or may not be true, but I believe Giovanni's reply compelled the pope to give Francis a favorable answer. This was given with some condescension, and with a hidden meaning regarding authority, which the Franciscans in their joy failed to perceive at the moment, but were to discover at a later day. They really left Rome under the partial jurisdiction of the Catholic church.

The months which immediately followed were the brightest of St. Francis' life. His popularity in

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Assisi was extraordinary. All opposition departed even from the priests, and day after day he preached to throngs in the great cathedral. He attacked the existing evils of the state and church, as well as those of private life. His voice was raised against oppression, always in favor of the poor, and he had the great delight of bringing together contending factions in his own city.

In 1211, the Santa Maria degli Angeli chapel or Portiuncula was ceded to the Franciscans "in perpetuity." They began to build their huts about it, and thus was established the first Franciscan convent. From this center the members of the order went forth over the surrounding country. The record of these journeys is remarkable in that it illustrates the perfect devotion of these men to their ideals. As they traveled they preached or taught, gaining many converts, but they did more. They went into the homes of the poor, nursing the sick, becoming servants, performing menial work; they stopped in the field to help the farmer gather his grain or till the soil; they found their greatest joy in serving their fellow-men. We wonder at the power of St. Francis, inspiring in such a short time in these men's hearts a desire to follow so rigid a manner of life.

With the advancement of the Franciscan movement the little town of Assisi had put on new importance. There was an air of wonderment and expectancy in the hearts of the people as they walked along the mountain slope or down the valley. St. Francis had become a holy man to them, but

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

enveloped in a mystery which their dull minds could not penetrate; yet when he came to them he was simple minded, loving hearted as ever.

In the early years of the order there seemed to be no necessity for government, but as the numbers increased, complete organization became imperative. The order was established in 1209, and a first conference or Chapter was held in the valley near Assisi in 1216. The Franciscans came, and with them many people from the neighboring towns, their desire to pay homage to St. Francis overshadowing all else. They only longed to sit at his feet and listen to his words. They made no preparations, sleeping in the open fields under the mild Umbrian summer sky, but the people from the near-by villages came laden with simple necessities, careful to observe the wishes of St. Francis. Sabatier has well likened this first gathering to an American camp-meeting.

The next year the order had so increased that only delegates and members of importance were called. The evangelization of other countries was the work before this Chapter, and at its conclusion, many of the brothers were sent in groups to Germany, France and Spain.

Saint Dominic was one of the guests of honor. His organization was quite different from the Franciscan Order; his following was small, his efforts being exerted to bring about a revival of learning among the clergy. The work was ambitious and important, but not so necessary as the deeply religious work of St. Francis. He received more recognition and favors

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

at Rome than did St. Francis, and there was an effort made to unite the Franciscans and Dominicans, but this was unsuccessful. "St. Francis and St. Dominic have been called the two great reformers of the thirteenth century. St. Francis taught men how to behave, St. Dominic taught them what they should think."

St. Dominic came to the Chapter of 1217, with little sympathy in his heart for the methods of St. Francis or the rules of his order. He was amazed to see the devotion, the enthusiasm, the simple faith of the Franciscans, taking no thought for themselves, knowing that their needs would be supplied. It is said, that even while he was remonstrating with St. Francis on the lack of care for his followers, he looked over the hills and saw the villagers coming with the food for the day. As the hours passed, the spirit of criticism left him; begging forgiveness for his doubts, he departed at the close of the chapter with a strong inclination to accept the poverty vow.

The following year the chapter devoted itself to the Crusades, and there was a desire on the part of many to have St. Francis lead one of them, but Brother Elias was sent in his stead. At the conferences of 1219 and 1220, discussions of the rules were frequent and animated; factions developed and the influence of St. Francis as leader began to wane.

Thomas of Celano relates that St. Francis, while upon a visit to Alviano, preached a powerful sermon, and the people of the town were so impressed that

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

they all wished to join the order. Many other converts had expressed the same desire, but could not well subscribe to the rules. So, "to meet the needs of devout persons still living, and compelled by duty, to live in the world," the Third Order of the Franciscans was established in the year 1221. The members consisted of married men and women, as well as others, and were called Tertiaries.

In a very short time this new organization attracted many thousands. The Penitents, as they were also called, took this vow,—“I promise and vow to God, the Blessed Virgin, our father St. Francis, and all the saints of Paradise, to keep all the commandments of God, during the entire course of my life, and to make satisfaction for the transgressions which I may have committed against the Rule and manner of life of the Order of Penitents, instituted by St. Francis, according to the will of the visitor of that Order, when I am admitted into it.” To this vow certain requirements were added. They were asked to avoid vain amusements; they pledged themselves to give back all unjustly acquired goods; to make their wills so as to prevent strife among their heirs; not to take an oath except in extraordinary cases; and not to accept public office. Lawsuits were forbidden, and they could not bear arms; married women could not join the order without the consent of their husbands. They were required to visit the sick and pray for them, attend mass and be faithful to the church. The democratic principles of the order made it very popular, but frequent clashes with the political powers precip-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

itated persecutions, which, however, ceased under Gregory IX, who gave them protection.

Beloved and honored as was Francis of Assisi in his own city, he could have indefinitely continued his work among the Umbrian hills. But his roving spirit was not easily confined; he had more to give than Assisi could absorb. World-wide was his desire and universal his love for man. Doubtless he was influenced more or less by the Crusades, nearly all of which took place during his lifetime, and his missionary zeal was so great that he believed he could succeed where those efforts had failed. His chivalrous nature was stirred by thoughts of peril, and he prayed that he might be considered worthy to win and wear a martyr's crown. No accurate account of his missionary journeys has been preserved, but his hardships and discouragements must have been very great, for he often fled back for refuge to the Portiuncula to revive his drooping spirits.

He traveled throughout Italy from north to south. In every town thousands came to him to receive his blessing; many rich men offered him their possessions and became members of his order. He might have sought and obtained political power, but never for a moment did he forget his mission; he was always the feeble instrument in the hand of God, helping to redeem the world.

In 1219 and 1220, he visited Egypt. Overtaking one of the Crusades he lingered for some time in the camp of the invaders. His converts were many, and he even preached before the Sultan himself, beseeching him to accept the Christian religion.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

After the victory of the Crusaders at Damietta, a city of the Nile, he departed for the Holy Land, where we must leave him visiting the places made sacred by the presence of Jesus, while we return to Italy where he was sorely needed, for the Franciscan ideal was being betrayed by those whom he called his friends.

You will remember that Innocent III had given his sanction to the rule of the Franciscan order, the vow of poverty. The pope died in 1216, and Honorius III, his successor, had continued this approval. Meanwhile the order had greatly increased in numbers and influence; its missionaries had carried its message into all the adjoining countries and established their centers of evangelization. The powers at Rome had watched the growing strength of the movement with some chagrin, but were biding the time most propitious, when it might be diverted to their own emolument. With subtle suggestion they endeavored to persuade Francis to substitute one of the regular rules of the church for his own, but he had refused to yield. Never was he so much a saint as when he stood before this greatest of world powers pleading his cause. In the great gatherings of the Chapter-General, where thousands of his followers, monks and laymen, met to discuss the work and government of the order, he was beset by many influences seeking to lighten the burden of the vow of poverty, but none could withstand his tender words of appeal, all opposition fled away before his beauty of soul and humility of spirit, just as the shadows flee before the rising sun.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

And during his absence in the far East, discontent began to manifest itself. Modifications were suggested for the rules, overtures were made to the church and danger threatened the very existence of the order. One of the faithful hurried to find Francis and bring him home. He arrived at Venice in September, 1220, and immediately convoked the Chapter-General. He was met with a great demonstration of joy, but never losing an opportunity, he stopped at many places to preach on his way to Assisi.

Of the character of this preaching we have an eloquent description in the following:

"I was studying at Bologna, I, Thomas of Spalato, archdeacon in the cathedral church of that city, when in the year 1220, the day of the Assumption, I saw St. Francis preaching on the *piazza* of the Lesser Palace, before almost every man in the city. The theme of his discourse was the following: Angels, men, demons. He spoke on all these subjects with so much wisdom and eloquence that many learned men who were there were filled with admiration at the words of so plain a man. Yet he had not the manner of a preacher, his ways were rather those of conversation; the substance of his discourse bore especially upon the abolition of enmities and the necessity of making peaceful alliances. His apparel was poor, his person in no respect imposing, his face not at all handsome, but God gave such great efficacy to his words that he brought back to peace and harmony many nobles whose savage fury had not even stopped short before the shedding of blood. So great a devotion was felt for him that

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

men and women flocked after him, and he esteemed himself happy who succeeded in touching the hem of his garment."

It was becoming clearer that the church had decided to bring Francis to terms. He was undoubtedly a thorn in the flesh, and the pope was unaccustomed to opposition, particularly the opposition of gentleness, as personified in the saint. They knew full well that this gentleness could not be driven, they therefore tried persuasion.

The Cardinal Ugolino, who had long been a personal friend of Francis, was chosen for this delicate mission. He met him shortly after his return to Italy, and expressing much solicitude for his health, carried him away for a few weeks to a quiet resting place. I am not prepared to condemn Ugolino for this apparent betrayal of friendship. He believed in the sincerity of Francis, but thought him obstinate, and that he was standing in his own light in his independent attitude toward the church. The struggle between the two men was short and decisive and not without its pathetic side.

Francis was frail and weak, physically unable to cope with the superior strength of Ugolino. At the conclusion of every interview he was conscious of having lost ground; he began to feel his self-confidence slowly slipping away from him, its place being filled by that vacillation which is the forerunner of surrender. In his deep humility he acknowledged that he might have been wrong in enforcing the rule of the order, and finally consented to go submissively to the pope.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

In the conferences which followed he offered no serious opposition. It was the hour of his mental crucifixion, because he was giving up that for which he had labored so faithfully for many years.

I quote from Sabatier: "In his own conscience he well knew that the old ideal was the true, the right one; but he drove away such thoughts as the temptations of pride. The recent events had not taken place without in some degree weakening his moral personality; from being continually talked to about obedience, submission, humility, a certain obscurity had come over this luminous soul; inspiration no longer came to it, with the certainty of other days; the prophet had begun to waver, almost to doubt of himself and of his mission."

In this condition of mind he felt it necessary to resign the care of the order to other hands, and after granting the concessions asked for in the rules, he withdrew to the Portiuncula.

Events had crowded thick and fast into the life of St. Francis. The order had grown far beyond his expectations. He did not possess the gift of organization or control, therefore when dissension arose he shrank from controversy and the strife which it engenders, preferring to obliterate himself in order to keep the peace.

He did not separate himself from the Franciscan Order, neither was authority taken from him. He was dearly beloved always, and never lost the allegiance of his followers. His abdication was voluntary. In the great gathering of the Chapter-



ST. FRANCIS STANDING BEFORE HIS CELL

From a painting by Bellini

*From a photograph by permission of the
owner, Mr. Henry C. Frick*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

General in 1223, he was the central figure, and to him was given the revision of the rule of the order.

The three years which followed were the closing years of his life, for he died in 1226. A little hermitage was prepared for him on one of the Umbrian hills, and there he made his humble home. One wishes that he might have passed these years in peaceful meditation under the loving care of faithful friends, but this was not to be. As the news came to him from time to time of the evolution of the order, he was overwhelmed with regret at his weakness of the past; day after day was spent in agonizing prayer and self denunciation; his eyes were red with weeping, their sight almost destroyed. He sent protest after protest to his brethren, but little heed was given to them. At times he would seek comfort in work, and go from place to place preaching as in the earlier days, and with even greater power. Then his poor, broken body would fail, and he would lie for weeks suffering and discouraged. In this condition, doubts came and tormented him, his faith weakened, but he had his hours of exaltation as well, from which he emerged chastened and purified. So the struggle went on month after month.

St. Francis was the recipient of many gifts during his lifetime. Large sums of money were given to him which were used for the repairing of churches and the propagation of the order. There were two gifts, however, of special importance and significance, the discarded, worn-out chapel of the Portiuncula, and the dreary, rocky hill of La Verna. These were bestowed without sacrifice on the part of the donors,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

but St. Francis counted them his most cherished possessions. We are told in the Fioretti about the presentation of Mt. Verna, and the story is too interesting to pass by.

On one of his journeys with Brother Leo from Spoleto to Romagna, they passed by the castle of Montefeltro, where were assembled "a great company of gentle-folk," celebrating the knighting of one of the counts. Never wishing to lose an opportunity, St. Francis entered the castle courtyard where the people were all assembled, and mounting upon the parapet, began to preach. The crowd was deeply moved by his eloquence, particularly a wealthy gentleman of Tuscany, Orlando by name, who sought him out at the conclusion of the sermon desiring more intimate acquaintance. Francis, wishing perhaps to test him a little, bade him go back to his friends, dine with them, and afterward come to him if he desired. And Orlando came. He was much concerned regarding the condition of his soul, for that was the burden of his talk, and at the conclusion he said, "I have in Tuscany a mountain, most proper for devotion, which is called the Mount of Alvernia, and is very lonely and right well fitted for those who wish to do penance in a place remote from men, or whoso may desire to live a solitary life. If it should please thee, right willingly would I give it to thee and thy companions for the salvation of my soul."

St. Francis replied, that with his permission he would send two of his friends, and if they found the mountain a place well fitted for prayer and repent-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ance, he would gratefully accept it. A few weeks after Orlando received them "with great joy and charity," giving them men to show them the way and to guard them from danger. They found the mountain a barren, gloomy place, but after searching awhile they came to a little level space which pleased them, and with the assistance of the men they constructed a rude hut out of the branches of the trees, and took possession. St. Francis received their report with much satisfaction, and speaking to Brothers Masseo, Angelo and Leo, he said: "My sons, our forty days' fast of St. Michael the Archangel draweth near; I firmly believe that it is the will of God that we keep this fast on the Mount of Alvernia, which by divine decree hath been made ready for us." So they set out on their journey, stopping each night where they might beg a little bread and shelter. At the end of the third day, they drew near to the foot of the rock of Alvernia itself, and it pleased St. Francis to rest a little under the oak which was by the way, and is there to this day; and as he stood under it he began to take note of the situation of the place and of the country round, and as he was gazing, lo! There came a great multitude of birds from divers parts, the which, with singing and flapping of their wings, all showed joy and gladness exceedingly great, and came about him in such fashion that some settled on his head, some on his shoulders, and some on his arms, some in his lap, and some 'round his feet. When his companions marvelled, he spoke thus unto them: "I believe, brothers most dear, that it is pleasing unto our

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord Jesus Christ that we should dwell in this lonely mountain, seeing that our little sisters and brothers the birds show such joy at our coming." Thus St. Francis and his followers took possession of the "lonely mountain," which was henceforth to be one of their places of refuge, and the scene of the stigmatization.

Never shall I forget one May noon-day, standing on the balcony of Hotel Subasio, at Assisi, M. Sabatier beside me, with his field-glass. Far, far below us lay the peaceful valley of Umbria bathed in sunshine. As I had gazed at Assisi from the Perugian terrace, so now I looked back upon the once strong and haughty city perched high upon its almost impregnable hilltop. But my thoughts were full of St. Francis, and I strained my eyes to see the haunts made sacred by his presence. The big dome of Santa Maria degli Angeli was the most prominent feature of the adjacent landscape; on the mountain side was San Damiano, and beyond, almost hidden by the trees, Carceri, the old convent; in the valley the ancient site of Rivo Torto, and far off, but dimly visible, the shadows of Mt. Verna. Sabatier talked quietly of these places and of the saint's life, until it all seemed very real to me, and the events and years not far removed.

La Verna, sometimes called the "Mountain of Spring," is situated in the Apennines, about thirty miles north of Assisi. It is of large dimensions, is very wild and barren, and crowned by the lofty peak of Penna. The portion chosen by St. Francis was on the southwestern slope in the woods, and the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

little huts were erected there, to be used whenever he desired them. As he drew near to the end of his life, he spent much time in this sequestered spot, as he longed for solitude and seemed to shrink from mingling with men.

La Verna to-day is one of the many memorials of St. Francis in the Umbrian valley. After his death a monastery was built near the scene of the stigmatization, and numerous chapels have been erected close by for the use of the monks. The buildings have passed through the vicissitudes of the centuries, but some are still standing and are occupied by attendants who are faithful to the memory of the saint.

The mystical events in the lives of the saints have always provoked discussion, and have been stumbling blocks to the Protestant mind. I have been deeply interested in M. Sabatier's attitude toward these happenings in the life of St. Francis. The saint was a mystic; he dreamed strange dreams, he saw visions, and I must confess, as I have read Sabatier's pages devoted to this subject, I have felt no doubts coming to disturb my tranquillity. I am not prepared to advance any theories regarding visions. Psychic events have passed the theoretic stage; they are vigorously knocking at the door of every man's mind for admittance and recognition in these opening years of the twentieth century, and narrow indeed is he who refuses to open the door. Telepathy, Hypnotism, Thought Transference, are established facts to-day, and Visions and Voices require just a little more faith. Alas, our faith in

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the supernatural or anything beyond the normal, is very, very weak; we are prone to disbelieve those things which we cannot see, explain or handle.

Celestial visions are, I believe, reserved for those who have lived in close communion with God. St. Francis asserts that Christ appeared to him and spoke with him on several occasions. If ever a man endeavored to imitate and live the life of Christ, it was Francis; he had no deeper thought or desire; he literally left all and followed Him. He had no bride but the "Lady Poverty;" he rejoiced in deprivation, going to the extreme of bodily discomfort and self-torture that he might be more worthy of his Master. He spent hours before the cross pleading for light and forgiveness, he devoted his life to loving service, his conversation was on one theme alone. Such a life as that is so rare in this world, its experience so uncommon, its atmosphere so transcendent, that I have no desire whatever to rob it of its heavenly visions.

The most mystical experience connected with the life of St. Francis was his receiving the stigmata. This event has always been so closely associated with the stories of his life and the legends regarding him, that it cannot be ignored. Many pages have been written about this very strange phenomenon. Men of undoubted veracity have testified as to its reality from their own personal knowledge, others have endeavored to disprove it. Sabatier has carefully collected the evidence on both sides, and unhesitatingly has accepted it as a miracle. His chapter devoted to the account of it is beautiful in its tender-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ness and convincing power. My own recital is gathered from its pages.

In the summer of 1224, two years before his death, St. Francis attended the meeting of the chapter. At its conclusion, with a few of his most devoted brethren, he departed for Mt. Verna. He was sick and weary both in mind and body, and seemed to have a premonition that his life's work was nearly done. He again sought out this peaceful place of refuge for meditation and prayer. His companions lingered near him unobtrusively, ready to respond to his slightest wish. He conversed with them a little each day, but absented himself most of the time wandering into the forest, thoroughly absorbed in devotion. He spent days in fasting, and hours' upon his knees; he read the story of our Lord's passion over and over until his heart melted with love and pity, and his whole being went out in a great longing; he was completely possessed by a divine ecstasy. "He doubled his fastings and prayers, quite transformed into Jesus by love and compassion," says one of the legends. He passed the night before the festival of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in prayer. No one may ever know what took place during those hours, and no opinion should be expressed except with reverence. One of his prayers has been preserved, and the words might lead us to believe that he actually prayed for the stigmata, for he prayed after this manner: "O my Lord Jesus Christ, two graces I pray of Thee before I die: The first, that in my life I may feel in my soul and in my body, so far as is possible, that pain, which Thou,



ST. FRANCIS RECEIVES THE STIGMATA

Fresco by Giotto in Santa Croce Church

*From a photograph by courtesy
of Alinari*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

sweet Lord, didst bear in the hour of Thy bitterest suffering; the second is that I may feel in my heart, so far as is possible, that exceeding love by which Thou, dear Son of God, wast kindled to bear willingly so great suffering for us sinners."

Brother Leo alone was admitted to close companionship while these eventful days were passing and he, poor soul, was deeply distressed as he saw Francis growing weaker and weaker, forgetful of even the necessities of life; yet he feared to speak, lest he should be thought disobedient. Every morning he followed him through the woods as far as he was permitted to go, then returning to his hut would await his coming in longing anxiety. More than once his desire overcame him, and he stealthily sought out the saint, watching him from his place of concealment. He always found him praying or conversing, as if the Lord was in his actual presence.

The yearnings and prayers of St. Francis were centered upon the great Feast Day. On the morning of that day, as he did not return to his hut, Leo and his friends made search for him, and found him in a lonely spot lying unconscious on the ground, with the marks of the stigmata on his body. When he regained consciousness he told them that he had had a vision.

"In the rays of the rising sun, which after the chill of night came to revive his body, he suddenly perceived a strange form. A seraph, with outspread wings, flew toward him from the edge of the horizon, and bathed his soul in raptures unutterable. In the center of the vision appeared a cross, and the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

seraph was nailed upon it. When the vision disappeared, he felt sharp sufferings mingled with the ecstasy of the first moments. Stirred to the very depths of his being, he was anxiously seeking the meaning of it all, when he perceived upon his body, the stigmata of the Crucified."

The marks of the stigmata were "fleshy excrescences" upon his hands and feet where the nails were driven into the Christ, and a wound on the side where the spear was thrust into the side of our Saviour on the Cross.

Do not doubt the miracle until you experience the ecstasy, and then perchance you will have no mind to doubt it.

After such a visitation as this, St. Francis seemed to be set apart from other men. He was looked upon with awe, his very presence became sacred. The culmination of his soul's ecstasy had come in that transcendent moment on Mt. Verna. To him it was an holy place, and his intense spirit could sojourn there no longer. The next morning he was led gently down the mountain side. While utterly oblivious to those about him, he yet knew that he was leaving La Verna for the last time, for arriving at the foot of the hills, he knelt upon the ground and said: "Adieu, Mount Verna, may God bless thee, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; abide in peace; we shall never see one another more."

For days he seemed to be in a trance. As he journeyed through the little villages, the people came to meet him, and he performed not a few miracles of healing; then his restless energy returned

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and he began preaching through the Umbrian towns with greater power than ever.

He was but forty-two years of age at this time; his body, however, was wasted and worn out, his eyes almost blind. Yielding to the importunities of his friends he went to Rieti to submit to an operation of cauterization. When he saw the red hot iron which was to be drawn across his forehead, he shrank at first, "but immediately making the sign of the cross over the glowing iron, 'Brother fire,' he said, 'you are beautiful above all creatures; be favorable to me in this hour; you know how much I have always loved you; be thou courteous today.' "

He received no relief from this treatment, and during the weeks and months which followed, gradually failed in strength, until the moment came when he knew his work was ended and he must prepare for death. His first desire was to be taken to Assisi. The journey was doubtless begun from Cortona, a little town about thirty-five miles north of Assisi, and twenty miles north of Perugia. He was probably carried thither on a cot by the hands of loving friends, and we can see the sad procession wending its way up and down the steep hills, bearing its precious burden, avoiding hostile Perugia (lest the body of the saint should be taken from them by force, that it might become that city's possession after death); and journeying far over to Gubbio, then down to his beloved city, a distance in all of sixty miles.

It was a triumphal home coming, for all the people came out to meet him. Arriving at the gateway,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Francis bade them wait, and as they knelt reverently about him, he raised himself to take one long last look upon the beautiful valley, and the lovely autumn scene. He was housed in the bishop's palace, the best the city had to offer him, where he lay for many days, free from pain, a song on his lips, speaking loving words to those about him, and sending tender messages to the absent ones. His soul was at peace. A few days before his death, he asked to be removed to his beloved Portiuncula. The little journey was safely accomplished. True to his teachings he wished to die in humble surroundings. The end came on Saturday, October 3, 1226, at nightfall.

When the news of the death of St. Francis reached the city, the people came in great numbers into the woods surrounding the Portiuncula. Many were admitted to view the body, and gave their testimony of seeing the marks of the stigmata.

While the grief of the Assisians was intense, mingled with it there was much superstitious rejoicing, for the body of the great saint was a priceless treasure, and Assisi thereafter would be visited by thousands, and miracles without number would be performed within her walls. Assisi differed not from other cities in her desire for this kind of notoriety. The bodies of the saints were jealously guarded and fiercely contended for when unfriendliness prevailed between the inhabitants.

All night and the following day songs of praise resounded on the hillside, and after mass had ended, the long procession began its walk to the city. Branches of trees had been plucked by the people,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

which they waved in the air as they sang. A short stop was made at San Damiano, where St. Clare and her nuns took a sorrowful farewell of their beloved friend. The funeral services were held in the cathedral where St. Francis had preached many times. It is supposed that he was buried there. Some mystery surrounds the event, and Brother Elias has been charged with keeping secret the resting place and not disclosing it until the body had been removed and safely placed deep down in its rocky tomb beneath the Lower Church.

I remember I was deeply moved as I walked down the long flight of marble steps in the spacious, dimly lighted vault, and saw the great rock in the center into which the sarcophagus was sunk, and the steel bars guarding it all with silent strength. St. Francis died nearly seven hundred years ago, and doubtless all that remains of that which is being so strongly guarded is a handful of dust; but his spirit still lives and the beauty of his soul cannot be confined.

July 26, 1228, St. Francis was canonized. Pope Gregory IX came to Assisi to preside at the ceremonies, and the next day the corner-stone was laid of the great church which bears his name. It was Assisi's proudest day, and the little city would fain have stretched her narrow streets and strong walls, in order that all might share in her hospitality. That could not be, but the great throng could find shelter on the slopes of Mt. Subasio, and down on the plain, and rest peacefully under the warm Umbrian sky.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

An interesting story might be written of the work of the Franciscans after the death of St. Francis, but we will devote only a few words to this subject.

In the year 1224, they established themselves in England, locating at London, Oxford and Canterbury, and in fifty years numerous friaries had been erected, and the number of friars had grown to twelve hundred. The English order stood very high intellectually, producing many men of prominence, of whom Roger Bacon was one of the foremost.

During the administration of Elias the order prospered to an extraordinary degree, extending its work into many new provinces, organizing new missions, and many of the friars entered the universities, becoming rivals of the Dominicans as teachers of theology.

The members of the order were not, however, in full accord with this idea of expansion, and later on the opposition became so strong that the organization was divided into three parties; the Zealots, "who called for a liberal observance of St. Francis' rule and testament;" the "Party of Relaxation" who did not practice the poverty vow, and the large middle party called the Moderates, who desired to maintain the simple life ordained by St. Francis, but were anxious to have the order grow and its influence extended as a medium of education. The Moderate party included nearly all the friars in England, France and Germany.

In succeeding years the order passed through many changes, being rent by schisms and united by

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

reforms, until in 1517, Leo X divided it into two distinct bodies: the Conventuals, "who were authorized to use the various papal dispensations regarding the observance of poverty, could possess property and fixed income;" and the Observants, "who were bound to as close an observance of St. Francis' rule of poverty and all else as was practically possible."

Other changes and reforms took place in the seventeenth century until finally Leo XIII grouped the members into three bodies: Conventuals, Observants and Capuchins, the latter claiming to carry out the teachings of St. Francis more nearly than any of the other divisions.

Few chapters of history tell a more thrilling tale than that of the life of the Franciscan missionaries among the Indians of Mexico and Southern California in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The ruins of the old missions which still exist remind us of the hardships, suffering and devotion of this brave body of men. Their famous leader, Father Junipero Serra, was born in 1712, came to Mexico in 1749, and to California in 1768. He founded San Diego and Monterey, and died in 1784, at the San Carlos mission. He was a most remarkable man, possessing the love and confidence of his many converts, for whom he freely gave his life in tender ministrations. He was worthy to stand by the side of the man whose life and teachings he so faithfully exemplified, Saint Francis of Assisi.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Will of St. Francis

See in what manner God gave it to me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance; when I lived in sin, it was very painful to me to see lepers, but God Himself led me into their midst, and I remained there a little while. When I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter had become sweet and easy. A little while after I quitted the world, and God gave me such a faith in his churches that I would kneel down with simplicity and I would say: "We adore Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all thy churches which are in the world, and we bless Thee that by Thy holy cross thou hast ransomed the world."

Besides, the Lord gave me and still gives me so great a faith in priests who live according to the form of the holy Roman Church, because of their sacerdotal character, that even if they persecuted me, I would have recourse to them. And even though I had all the wisdom of Solomon, if I should find poor secular priests, I would not preach in their parishes without their consent. I desire to respect them like all the others, to love them and honor them as my lords. I will not consider their sins, for in them I see the Son of God, and they are my lords. I do this because here below I see nothing, I perceive nothing corporeally of the most high Son of God, if not his most holy Body and Blood which they receive, and they alone, distribute to others. I desire above all things to honor and venerate all these most holy mysteries and to keep them precious. Whenever I find the sacred names of Jesus or his words in indecent places, I desire to take them away,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and I pray that others take them away and put them in some decent place. We ought to honor and serve all the theologians and those who preach the most holy words of God, as dispensing to us spirit and life.

When the Lord gave me some brothers no one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I ought to live according to the model of the holy gospel. I caused a short and simple formula to be written, and the lord pope confirmed it for me.

Those who presented themselves to observe this kind of life distributed all that they might have to the poor. They contented themselves with a tunic, patched within and without, with the cord and breeches, and we desired to have nothing more. The clerks said the office like other clerks, and the laymen Paternoster. We loved to live in poor and abandoned churches, and we were ignorant and submissive to all. I worked with my hand, and would continue to do, and I will also that all other friars work at some honorable trade. Let those who have none learn one, not for the purpose of receiving the price of their toil, but for their good example and to flee idleness. And when they do not give us the price of the work, let us resort to the table of the Lord, begging our bread from door to door. The Lord revealed to me the salutation which we ought to give, "God give you peace! Let the brothers take great care not to receive churches, habitations, and all that men build for them, except as all is in accordance with the holy poverty which we have

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

vowed in the Rule, and let them not receive hospitality in them except as strangers and pilgrims. I absolutely interdict all the brothers, in whatever place they may be found, from asking any bull from the court of Rome, whether directly or indirectly, under pretext of church or convent or under pretext of preachings, nor even for their personal protection. If they are not received anywhere, let them go elsewhere, thus doing penance with the benediction of God.

I desire to obey the minister-general of the fraternity, and the guardian whom he may please to give me. I desire to put myself entirely into his hands, to go nowhere and do nothing against his will, for he is my lord.

Though I be simple and ill, I would, however, have always a clerk who will perform the office, as it is said in the Rule; let all the other brothers also be careful to obey their guardians and to do the office according to the Rule. If it come to pass that there are many who do not the office according to the Rule, and who may desire to make any other change, or if they are not Catholics, let all the brothers, wherever they may be, be bound by obedience to present them to the nearest custode. Let the custodes be bound by obedience to keep him well guarded like a man who is in bond night and day, so that he may not escape from their hands until they personally place him in the minister's hands. And let the minister be bound by obedience to send him by brothers who will guard him as a prisoner day and night until they shall have placed him in the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

hands of the Lord Bishop of Ostia, who is the lord, the protector, and the corrector of all the Fraternity.

And let the Brothers not say: "This is a new Rule;" for this is a reminder, a warning, an exhortation; it is my Will, that I, little Brother Francis, make for you, my blessed Brothers, in order that we may observe in a more catholic way the Rule which we promised the Lord to keep.

Let the minister-general, all the other ministers and the custodes be held by obedience to add nothing to and take nothing from these words. Let them always keep this writing near them, beside the Rule; and in all the chapters which shall be held, when the Rule is read, let these words be read also.

I interdict absolutely, by obedience, all the Brothers, clerics and laymen, to introduce glosses in the Rule, or in this Will, under pretext of explaining it. But since the Lord has given me to speak and to write the Rule and these words in a clear and simple manner, without commentary, understand them in the same way, and put them in practice until the end.

And may whoever shall have observed these things, be crowned in heaven with the blessings of the heavenly Father, and on earth with those of His well-beloved Son and of the Holy Spirit the Consoler, with the assistance of all the heavenly virtues and all the saints.

And I, little Brother Francis, your servitor, confirm to you, so far as I am able, this most holy benediction.

Amen.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

This document admits us into the very soul of St. Francis. It must have cost pangs of remorse in the breasts of those who had been his opponents, for according to some historians they sought to place a wrong construction on many of the words in the original rule and the will. Evidently this was foreseen by him, or he would not have written the paragraph. "I interdict absolutely by obedience, etc."

The translation of the will seems a little crude, and some portions are not altogether intelligible to the Protestant mind, but the uppermost thought in the heart of the saint was that his followers should be true to the precepts of the rule which they "promised the Lord to keep." His last pleading was earnest, but loving; he left blessings for those who observed it, but no anathemas for those who violated it.

Francis reveals himself in his will to be a true son of the Catholic church—obedient to its forms—believing in the mysteries which it promulgates—yet the attitude of his soul toward God is Protestant. He recognizes but one authoritative source for the guidance of his life: "The Most High Himself revealed to me that I ought to live according to the model of His holy gospel." This bespeaks for him a broad-minded Christianity which was quite unknown in his day.

After the death of Francis, the factions of the Franciscan Order engaged in very bitter strife. Sabatier records that in 1230, Ugolino, then Gregory IX, issued a bull giving a wrong interpretation to

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the rule, declaring that the brothers should not be bound to the observation of the will. This action increased the antagonism. Some of St. Francis' earliest and closest friends were compelled to seek safety in hiding, and the will was confiscated and burned by the victorious party.

We do not wonder that in the first years of Francis' career, when so many were flocking to his standard, he should have chosen some intimate disciples who were unworthy of his love and confidence. We marvel rather, unsophisticated and simple as he was, that he chose so wisely and so well. Brother Elias was the disturbing element. He was devoted at first, and admitted with all freedom into the innermost circle, but yielded to the temptation of political power after the order became strong. He possessed a masterful spirit, and was so prominent a figure in the events coming after the death of St. Francis, that a short sketch of his career may serve to increase our interest in what occurred in Assisi.

Elias was a native of Beviglia, a village near Assisi, a maker of mattresses and a teacher of children. Doubtless he was acquainted with Francis long before he became a leader, and it was thought by some that Elias was the man who first directed him to the church when he was in the midst of his great struggle. He was a man of intellectual power, but evidently of little prominence. When he joined the Franciscans is not known. We come suddenly upon his name as if it was understood that he was one of the order from the early days of the organization.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

His strength of mind and character, and close friendship with Francis, soon made him a leader and he was frequently chosen for difficult missions. His zeal for the Franciscan Order has been called half religious and half political, and he never hesitated to use the one to advance the interest of the other. When the order began its work in other countries, he was sent to Syria, in 1219, where he attained success, and returned bringing with him his most conspicuous convert, Caesar of Speyer, who became one of the faithful friends of St. Francis.

As the years passed and dissensions grew, Elias assumed the leadership of the liberal party, and in 1226, when St. Francis retired, he was chosen minister-general in his place. In 1227, he was defeated by his enemies, but bided his time and in 1232, was re-elected; he held office until 1239, when he was again deposed. Later he formed a close intimacy with Emperor Frederick, who despised the church, which led to his excommunication by the pope.

It is rather difficult to discover what was his ultimate ambition. He never rose to any heights of power politically, and during the last years of his life was an object of sympathy, despised by his former friends of the order, and cast aside by his more powerful political associates. He died almost friendless, and even his grave was desecrated.

Men with strong characteristics meet with strong condemnation at the hands of their enemies. Unfortunately for Elias his friends, if he had any, have never attempted to write any refutation of the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

long pages of abuse which are quite numerous among writings of the historians of his day. It is not altogether just to charge him with the wrecking of the Franciscan ideal. Many men more consecrated than he, shared his opinion, and it is quite probable that the work of the order would have been more efficient and enduring, and St. Francis might have lived longer to conduct it, had he not so minimized the importance of the body. St. Francis as minister-general had ruled the order in a spirit of love; Brother Elias was a hard master, governing with a rod of iron.

Salimbene, a Franciscan, born in 1221, has left us interesting information on these remarkable times, and does not hesitate to charge Elias with many wrongs, both in manner of government and in personal conduct. Salimbene was a zealot concerning church etiquette, and made these criticisms on the administration of Elias—"many lay brethren wore the tonsure, and yet they could not read—some dwelt in cities, hard by the churches, wholly enclosed in hermits' cells, and they had a window through which they talked with women—some brother would go away alone instead of choosing one to go with him—others cultivate the growth of beards—some wore no girdles—others wore very gay ones instead of the common cord." Elias was severe in his treatment of the priests, having no mercy for those who displeased him, although he could easily be appeased with gifts; "they trembled at him as a rush trembles when it is shaken under the water." He was accused of levying tribute, of

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

dealing in alchemy, of living in luxury and pomp, of owning "fat and big-boned palfreys," upon which he rode no matter how short the distance, thus breaking one of the rules of the Friars Minor. He ate alone, having many pages to wait upon him, and had a "special cook who made most delicate dishes."

Many of these faults while trivial in themselves, were, of course, antagonistic to the Franciscan rule, and as the supporters of Elias were many in number, the order was hopelessly divided. The strife was bitter, and Elias often resorted to violence in dealing with his enemies, having them scourged and cast into prison.

Poor Elias! we say as we read his history. He did not belong among the Franciscans; he loved the gentle Francis, but joined them with very different purposes in his heart.

His career was remarkable. Coming from lowly parentage, he gained through much privation the best education the times could offer; he rose rapidly in the ranks of the Franciscans until he became their minister-general; he was the intimate friend of Cardinal Ugolino, afterwards Pope Gregory, and later he was closely allied to Emperor Frederick; but he tried to use a great cause for his own ambition, and the cause being greater than the man, the man was defeated.

But we must not leave him here, for we have still to judge him by one more act, the crowning event of his tempestuous life. Immediately after the death of St. Francis, he assumed the charge of all matters Franciscan; when all others were dazed, his

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

mind was clear, and his tremendous energy asserted itself; his orders were decisive, his plans were quickly formed and carried out, until one day, to the consternation of the members of the order, he unfolded his great project of the convent and church he proposed to build in memory of the saint.

This seemed like the grossest sacrilege to the close adherents of St. Francis. He had always taught them to worship in huts and in chapels, to seek no honor for themselves, to be humble, to love poverty. Could their beloved St. Francis sleep in peace when all this was to be done for him, this money to be spent in his honor, which might do so much for the alleviation of the poor? Thus they reasoned, but Elias had counted upon this hostility, had armed himself with the sanction of the pope, had his plans all drawn, the site selected, and Franciscans all over Europe were solicited for the enterprise. Protests were in vain, enthusiasm for the work spread rapidly, and the splendid structure began to arise upon the hillside of Assisi.

Can you who have had the experience ever forget the morning ride from Perugia to Assisi? As we approach Assisi, the mists on Subasio are slowly lifting like a filmy curtain, and the town can be but faintly seen. The mass of buildings on the far left is San Francesco, built by the despised and unhappy Brother Elias. Did he do this because he loved Francis, and wished to atone for all the unhappiness he had brought into his life, or was he thinking how his own name would be brought down to posterity and be spoken of and written about by many, even

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

as I, a citizen of a country not then discovered, am writing of it to-day? We know not; but we do know as we approach nearer and nearer, and at last enter the doors of San Francesco and see the treasures on its walls, that we are thrilled through and through, and cannot find it in our hearts to condemn, but rather to say again: "Poor Elias!"

I know few characters in history more interesting or more inspiring than St. Francis of Assisi. His was a diversified life overflowing with experiences. By nature, he was chivalrous, knightly, romantic, and might have left a name renowned for deeds of valor, had not the current of his life been turned in a different direction. As a Christian reformer he possessed all the graces which win men; his love and sympathy were never failing, his gentleness and humility claimed and held their affection in return.

Few men have ever gained such complete control of the body as he. . . It was the only thing in the world which he seemed to despise. He starved it, exposed it to all sorts of rigorous treatment, clothed it scantily, subjected it to long hours of labor, separated it from comforts, using it only as the vehicle by which he might carry on his work. This could not be otherwise as long as he remained faithful to the poverty vow.

His inner life must have been full of tumult. As he appeared before men, he was hopeful, sure of himself, and wonderfully persuasive; when alone, or with his chosen few, he was at times drawn into

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ecstasies of joy as he communed with Christ, and at other seasons, well-nigh overwhelmed with despair as he thought of his sins. Our Lord's Passion obsessed him; the events of Holy Week passed in review before his mind continually; just a bit of morbidity found lodgment in his spirit, making his face sad, his demeanor serious. Then the differences in the Franciscan Order added much sorrow and heartache to the last years of his life; he was not a happy man, save when seeing his celestial visions.

Among the peoples of the civilized world, the Italian, more than any other, is the child of the soil. Nature has been lavish with her gifts in that beautiful land. The vine-clad hills and fertile valleys have been the homes of the people, the azure sky, the roof above their heads, while the constant sun, claiming perhaps a closer intimacy, has darkened their skin a little more than those of their brethren of the North. St. Francis was a true Italian, an ardent lover of nature. In those weary months of trial when first he renounced the world, when not before the crucifix, he would lie prone upon the ground seeking consolation. He loved the sweet earth, he rejoiced in the sun and rain, he sang to the moon and stars, he blessed the trees for their shade, and the cool grass, whose dew washed his feet as he walked through the meadows in the early morning. The flowers smiled up at him, and the vines clung to him tenderly as he passed by. He loved the beasts of the field, the fierce wolf of Gubbio, and the birds which perched upon his shoulders as he preached a

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

little sermon to them. His hand was never raised to destroy, for he looked upon all life as the handiwork of God.

He loved his fellow-men; and the deeper their misery and need, the more he loved them. He loved his God as perfectly as a human being can love Omnipotence, and we wonder that he did not possess a clearer vision of God's love to him. We pity him rolling in the snow to cool his passions; lying in the rose bushes and tearing himself with the thorns, subjecting himself to pain and bodily discomfort, in order that he might become more worthy of his Master. Yet with the monastic spirit so prevalent, how can we criticize him?

With all his tenderness of nature, St. Francis was a valiant soldier of the Cross. He knew no fear; he stood before popes to plead his cause; he preached to the Sultan; he proclaimed everywhere, the existing abuses of the church; he would have welcomed a martyr's death. I cannot picture him as a knight in shining armor, for I cannot separate him from his simple cowl, but I can see a sword in his hand, and as he holds it forth a ray of light shines out upon the way, before which many evil forms shrink in terror and flee affrighted.

The more one reads of St. Francis, the more one is impressed with the dramatic force of his life, a life full of motion, never stagnant. One is compelled also to recognize the tremendous power of that subtle energy called the spirit, which so completely turned the channel of his desires. As a youth he seemed to possess few qualifications for sainthood,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and the best we might have anticipated for him was successor to his father's trade, or a soldier of more or less renown. Those who believe this world is ruled by chance will see nothing in this transformation, but those who gaze deeper will see one called from the ranks, by the Moulder of the world's destiny, to become one of the world's great men.

Many saints have walked the streets of earth, differing greatly, just as men vary in other paths and walks of life. Some have been ascetics, preaching the subjection of the body; withdrawing from the world to meditate and pray; others, evangelists, devoting their lives to the spreading of the Gospel; or philanthropists, giving themselves and all their possessions for the betterment of their brother-man; and yet others have been scholars, who by their writings and arguments have become men of power and influence. St. Francis combined in himself many of these qualities. He was an ascetic, and we wonder at it when we remember how he ministered to his body in his youthful days; the troubadour and the saint wedded to poverty present a strong contrast. His inclination also led him at first to the monastery, but the planning of his career seemed to have been with-held from him for a time. Shortly after his conversion he began preaching, and soon became the great evangelist of his day. He was always philanthropic, for the large sums of money which came to him from hosts of followers were speedily distributed among the poor. Then he was a mystic and a dreamer, very practical as he preached and conversed with his followers, but when alone, com-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

pletely absorbed and going into many an ecstasy; and these strange mystical experiences which came into his life, did much to perpetuate his memory among the people of an impressionable era.

“St. Francis has been called ‘the great orthodox heretic.’ He established the idea of equality of all men before God, and the immediate relationship of the individual soul to the Deity.”

St. Francis was an Awakener. As his influence spread men began to see, and think, and feel, and when man’s faculties are wide awake, man’s power cannot be restricted. St. Francis was an Apostle of Light. He was a Pioneer, cutting his way through the wilderness of darkness, and blazing the trees that others might know the pathway. St. Francis was a great Reformer, although not a Protestant. He never stormed or upbraided as did Savonarola and Luther. His reformatory work was constructive, and he endeavored to accomplish his purpose by the power of gentle persuasion. Cognizant as he was of the existing evils within the church, he proposed no remedy for them; his work was of a personal nature; he loved to come in contact with humanity rather than with problems. Man’s soul was his work-ground, and he sought by entreaty to create in it a hatred of sin, then to plant the seed of truth. His sermons were very simple, being direct appeals to his hearers to lead a better life. Many writers have likened him to Christ in his unselfishness and service, and as these qualities in our Saviour won the love of men, so also, appearing in St. Francis, they made him, of all saints, the best beloved. His

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

influence grew and grew and was far reaching; it is so even to-day, for his gift to the world was of inestimable value. "He has been rescued from centuries of ignorant, superstitious handling, and given back to the world in his own native sweetness and light."

In the history of saints, Francis of Assisi occupies a position peculiarly his own. St. Augustine, living eight hundred years earlier, was highly educated. He was a scholar, teacher, philosopher, writer, the champion of orthodoxy and a Father in the church. He left a great impress on the age in which he lived by the strength of his will and power of his mind. St. Bernard of Clairvaux came seven hundred years later in the eleventh century. He, too, was a seeker after knowledge, and was richly endowed with all the graces of a refined intellect. His favor was sought by men of rank in the church and state; he was a great arbiter, chosen to settle disputes, political and religious. His sermons and hymns have come down to us as a rich heritage. St. Dominic, contemporary with St. Francis, was a man of learning, high in the favor of the church, a suppressor of heresies, possible founder of the Inquisition, and head of the Order which bears his name.

What a contrast between these men and St. Francis, the "little poor man of Assisi!" How like a child he appears when compared with them! Of little education (it has even been said that he could not write), friendless in high places, without influence, endured by the church, with meager endowments intellectually and physically, yet he was

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

enabled by a holy life to demonstrate that love, humility and tenderness, were the virtues which could overcome the world.

While contemplating the character of Francis of Assisi, one's mind must be free from criticism and skepticism. The thinker must get out of his present surroundings, and sloughing off the centuries of progress and culture one by one, must step backward into those strange old days when the world was half asleep, and the minds and hearts of the mass of the people were artless and childlike.

The career of Francis was sensational from the beginning. Event followed event in rapid succession, and by frequent repetition from mouth to mouth, put on many mysterious increments. Even his closest companions could not restrain their curiosity, often following him to his silent retreats, hoping to witness some uncommon occurrence. One has related that he saw St. Francis surrounded by angels, another asserts that Jesus was talking with him, and still another declares that he saw him lifted into the air in a moment of ecstasy. From this remarkable background emerges the strong personality of the saint delivering his new message of love, so well exemplified in his own life. Was it not natural therefore, that the people should flock after him, and should enshroud him in a cloud of glory which they could only approach in reverence and wonder? He was their "Blessed St. Francis," and they were his dear children.

As the Franciscan Order grew Francis found himself in a position of eminence which he had never

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

anticipated and from which he shrank in terror. He had preached and lived the life of self-obliteration, but was soon forced to accept the responsibility of the leadership of the greatest religious movement of the age. St. Francis needs no apologist; the glory of his achievement has never been questioned; but if I have read aright, he was filled with many misgivings as he saw the large additions coming to his order day by day, both at home and in other lands. When the chapters were established and he began to meet men of prominence who saw the possibilities of the organization in the world of politics and religion, he knew full well that he had reached the zenith of his influence and was unable to cope with these men in their plans of enlargement. This was largely due, I think, to his vow of poverty, and it was this vow of poverty upon which the Franciscans split, causing St. Francis such anguish of spirit, and doubtless hastening his death.

Francis, it will be remembered, was a boy of generous impulses; he had pity in his heart for the poor and unfortunate, and could seldom resist the importunity of a beggar on the street. It is said that he parted with his rich cloak one wintry day to shield a poor shivering wretch by the wayside, and during the last weeks of his young manhood, before leaving home, he frequently angered his father by his too lavish disbursements to the needy. I am inclined to believe that in the months of reflection which came to him, while a young convert, surrounded by the spirit of asceticism, that he was convinced that the most ample atonement he could

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

make for his past life of sin would be a complete renunciation of the luxury which had been the chief cause of his downfall.

This vow of holy poverty was made to his own heart, little dreaming that it was to become the foundation stone of the great order which was to bear his name. Later, when he began preaching and accepted disciples, he demanded the same obedience to the poverty vow, and would receive none who refused to be bound by the rule. Many and bitter were the struggles of his faithful followers seeking to keep their bodies under subjection, but very patient and tender was St. Francis in his ministrations to them in their hours of distress.

We read in the "Fioretti" that St. Francis and his companion, Brother Masseo, on one of their journeys, "came one day to a town sore hungered, and went, according to the rule, begging their bread for the love of God; and St. Francis went by one street, and Brother Masseo by another. But because St. Francis was mean to look upon and small of stature, and was deemed thereby a vile beggar by who so knew him not, he got by his begging naught but a few mouthfuls and scraps of dry bread; but to Brother Masseo, in that he was tall and fair of form, were given good pieces, large and in plenty, and of fresh bread. When that they had done their begging, they met together to eat in a place without the city, where was a fair fountain and, hard by, a fine broad stone, upon the which each set the alms that he had begged. And St. Francis seeing that Brother Masseo's pieces of bread were

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

more and finer and larger than his own rejoiced with great joy, and said: 'O, Brother Masseo, we are not worthy of such vast treasure;' and when he repeated many times these selfsame words, Brother Masseo made answer: 'Father, how can one speak of treasure where there is such poverty and lack of all things whereof there is need? Here is no cloth, nor knife, nor plate, nor porringer, nor house, nor table, nor man-servant, nor maid-servant.' Quoth St. Francis: 'And this it is that I account vast treasure, wherein is no thing at all prepared by human hands, but whatsoe'er we have is given by God's own providence, as manifestly doth appear in the bread we have begged, in the table of stone so fine, and in the fount so clear; wherefore I will that we pray unto God that He make us to love with all our heart the treasure of holy poverty, which is so noble that thereunto did God Himself become a servitor.' "

The "Fioretti" also gives an account of a great gathering of the Franciscans, called the Chapter of the Mats. On the first day St. Francis preached to them, concluding his sermon with these words: "I command you, by the merit of holy obedience, all ye who be gathered here, that no one of you take care or thought for aught to eat or for aught of the needs of the body, but turn all your thoughts to prayer and praise of God; and cast all your care for your body upon Him, for He careth tenderly for you.'

"And the Chief Shepherd, Christ, the Blessed One, desiring to show what care He has for His sheep, and what tender love for His poor ones,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

straightway put it into the hearts of the folk of Perugia, Spoleto, Foligno, Spello and Assisi, and the rest of the country 'round about, to bring food and drink unto this holy company. And lo! All at once from the parts aforesaid came men with beasts, horses and carts, with loaves of bread, of wine, of honeycombs, and cheese, and other good things to eat, according as the poor of Christ had need. Besides this, brought they napkins, pitchers, cups and glasses, and other vessels to serve the needs of so great a multitude, and he deemed himself blessed whoso could bring most or serve most diligently in such sort that even the knights and the barons and other gentle folk that came to see, did service unto them with great devotion and humility."

These two simple narratives give us an insight into conditions, and reveal to us that the yoke of the poverty vow did not rest easily upon the necks of many of the Franciscans.

Opinions were at variance both within the ranks of the order and outside in the church and in the world. Indeed, many students of Franciscan literature and sincere lovers of Francis believe that he erred in enforcing the vow. A friend, writing to me not long ago from Assisi, closed her letter, "St. Francis comes to mind and his vow of poverty, the memory of which is perpetuated on the walls of the great church which bears his name, and the query arises that had he espoused a righteous thrift and industry instead, might it not have been more beneficent for the Assisians during these centuries?" As for myself, I have not the heart to criticize him,

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

for I know his intense devotion and faith led him to accept the command of Christ literally. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey." "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor."

We can see how far we of the present day have drifted away from the ancient simplicity, and while the body should ever be kept under subjection, I know of no authority that is worthy which bids us debase it, starve it, or call it vile. Therefore, had St. Francis lived more sanely in this particular, might he not have lived more strongly and given his order greater power in the world? I know not, and a further discussion of this question would prove quite unprofitable, for it is utterly impossible to disassociate St. Francis from poverty. It would also appear that he was vindicated by the passing years, for after the first concession was granted concerning the poverty vow, others followed until the moral and spiritual tone of the order became debased.

I would not leave the impression that St. Francis was a gloomy ascetic, whose lips never parted in smiles, whose heart was always heavy with the burden of the world's woe. Poverty has been and now is the most common thing in all the earth. We cannot escape it; it brushes by us in the street, it begs at the doors of our homes, its greedy hand would never be appeased if all the gold of the world was poured into it. It is a slavery from which we shrink, and only here and there do we find one who is brave enough to grapple with it. It seems incredible that one

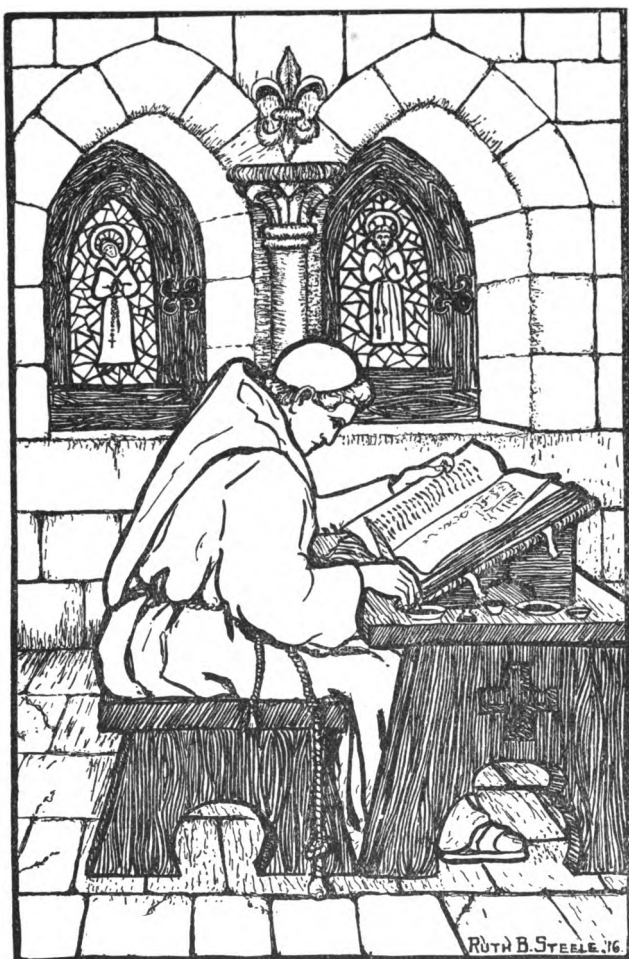
[190]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

should voluntarily seek it, yet St. Francis sought it, and step by step subdued his body, until its needs were minimized, its longings and desires perfectly controlled. Then he could say, "It (meaning poverty) is a treasure so high, excelling, and so divine, that we be not worthy to lay it up in our vile vessels; since this is that celestial virtue whereby all earthly things and fleeting are trodden under foot, and whereby all hindrances are lifted from the soul, so that freely she may join herself to God eternal." It is quite evident that any man living on so high a spiritual plane as these words would indicate, must be a man of cheerful mien and happy heart.

St. Francis was the first one in many centuries to infuse joy and hope into the Christian religion. The teaching of the church of his day was cold and comfortless. He brought to light once more the "glad tidings of great joy," which had long been submerged by superstition and doubt. His own life was overflowing with love and praise day by day. This was his great compelling power by which he drew so many to follow him; they could not resist the contagion of his radiant spirit.

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE



CHAPTER VI

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

Not long ago there appeared in the columns of a secular newspaper under the caption, "The Days We Celebrate," these interesting words: "This year (1909) is very important as anniversaries go, and we should be busy indeed if we should attempt to celebrate them all. John Calvin was born in 1509. Samuel Johnson, 1709. Tennyson, Gladstone, Darwin, Lincoln in 1809; it is the seven hundredth anniversary of the University of Cambridge, and the seven hundredth anniversary of the founding of the powerful Order of the Franciscan Friars, a very adequate peg, surely, on which to hang the wreath which the modern world seems freshly gathering for St. Francis of Assisi." Is there then a revival of interest in St. Francis in this twentieth century? Undoubtedly there is, and there are abundant reasons for it, too.

This awakening has brought in its train a large increase of Franciscan literature, and will continue so to do, until we shall have at our disposal a most adequate story of the saint's life and his times.

Father Paschal Robinson of Washington, an authority in this country on all matters Franciscan, has published a little pamphlet entitled, "A short Introduction to Franciscan Literature," which contains a formidable list of one hundred and eighty-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

three books on the subject by English, French, German and Italian authors. The earliest standard works are "Vita Prima" or "First Life," by Thomas of Celano in 1228, "Speculum Perfectionis" or the "Mirror of Perfection," by Brother Leo in 1228, "Legend of St. Francis, by "The Three Companions" in 1246, and "St. Bonaventura's Legend," in 1263. The "Fioretti," or "Little Flowers of St. Francis" made its appearance in the fourteenth century, its author unknown. The most important and complete history of our own day is "Vie de Saint François d'Assise," by Sabatier, published in 1894.

"The "First Life," by Thomas of Celano, was written at the request of Gregory IX. Thomas was a Franciscan of prominence and doubtless knew well the history of the order, but his book was prepared under the surveillance of the pope and Brother Elias, and therefore does not always truly represent the spirit of St. Francis. He omitted many events and exaggerated the influence of Elias. A few years later, however, the pope's regard for Elias having grown cold, their friendship turned to enmity. Celano's narrative became embarrassing and he was requested to re-write it. This time Franciscans everywhere were asked to send him what knowledge they possessed of the early days of the Order, and from this source and the revision of the "First Life," he compiled the "Second Life of St. Francis."

The little volumes by Bonaventura and the Three Companions tell the story simply and sweetly.

The "Mirror of Perfection," written shortly after the saint's death, was intended to rebuke those who

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

were striving to bring about dissension under the leadership of Elias. Brother Leo endeavored to reproduce the innermost thoughts of St. Francis regarding the vow of poverty and other rules of the order, and as he was his close companion he could write with authority.

The "Fioretti" is a most charming classic. It is divided into many short chapters, each with a heading of some length, as was the custom in the meager writings of the period. "How St. Francis passed a Lent in an island in the lake of Perugia where he fasted forty days and forty nights, and ate no more than one half loaf." "How as St. Francis and Brother Leo were going by the way, he set forth unto him what things were perfect joy." "How St. Francis miraculously healed one that was a leper, both in soul and body; and what the soul said to him as it went up into heaven." The author doubtless had a fanciful imagination, and the translators have brought out the beauties of the narratives in quaint old-fashioned English. It chronicles many of the events of St. Francis' life, his moments of sacred solitude, his talks with his followers as they journeyed, his anguish of spirit over his sins, and other circumstances which would not be revealed as belonging to his public life. It has been said, "This is not a biography, but a bouquet of the loving fancies that grew up around the deeds of a good man, and as such it embodies the faint elusive perfume of his soul."

We must prepare ourselves for a strong traditional element in many of the early writings about St.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Francis. So much of mystery enveloped him, that it was quite natural to exaggerate the most trivial occurrences until they became actual facts to the belief of the enthusiastic and credulous Franciscans, and sooner or later found their way with all their embellishments, into the literature of the day. There is, however, a way of approach to St. Francis' life which is full of truth and beauty, and we need but to use ordinary discrimination to discover it.

St. Francis was not a man of letters, yet he left a few writings, none of great literary merit, 'tis true, but possessed of much sentiment and tenderness. I quote from Father Robinson: "To say that the writings of St. Francis reflect his personality and his spirit is but another way of saying that they are once formidably mystic and exquisitely human; that they combine great elevation of thought with much picturesqueness of expression. * * * * *

St. Francis had the soul of an ascetic and the heart of a poet. His unbounded faith had an almost lyric sweetness about it; his deep sense of the spiritual is often clothed with the character of romance. This intimate union of the supernatural and the natural is nowhere more strikingly manifested than in the writings of St. Francis, which, after the vicissitudes of well nigh seven hundred winters, are still fragrant with the fragrance of the Seraphic spring-tide."

His writings were first collected in 1623 by Wadding and frequently published, but the old editions are very scarce. A little collection exists called "Admonitions," which may have been spoken to his

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

disciples by the wayside, possibly dictated to his secretary, Brother Leo, or may have been fragments of sermons. They contain quotations of scripture and rules of living, many in the form of beatitudes, like unto the Sermon on the Mount.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. They are truly peacemakers, who amidst all they suffer in this world, maintain peace in soul and body for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Blessed is the servant who gives up all his goods to the Lord God, for he who retains anything for himself hides his Lord's money, and that which he thinketh he hath shall be taken away from him."

"Where there is charity and wisdom there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where there is patience and humility there is neither anger nor worry. Where there is poverty and joy there is neither cupidity nor avarice. Where there is quiet and meditation there is neither solicitude nor dissipation."

Other writings were short "Praises" and "Prayers," five or six letters, his Will, the Blessing of Leo, and the "Canticle to the Sun." The latter was composed in 1225, a year before his death, and is but another proof of the loveliness of his soul.

"Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,
Praise, glory and honor and benediction all, are
Thine.

To Thee alone do they belong, most High.
And there is no man fit to mention Thee.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
Especially to my worshipful Brother Sun,
Thee, which lights up the day, and through him dost
Thou brightness give;

And beautiful is he and radiant with splendour great;
Of Thee, most High, signification gives.

Praise be my Lord, for Sister Moon and for the stars,
In heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious
and fair.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Wind
And for the air and clouds and fair and every kind of
weather,
By the which Thou givest to Thy creatures nourish-
ment.

Praised be my Lord for Sister Water,
The which is greatly helpful and humble and precious
and pure.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Fire,
By the which Thou lightest up the dark,
And fair is he and gay and mighty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our Sister, Mother Earth,
The which sustains and keeps us,
And brings forth diverse fruits with grass and flowers
bright.

Praised be my Lord for those who for Thy love
forgive

And weakness bear and tribulation.

Blessed those who shall in peace endure,
For by Thee, most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death,
From the which no living man can flee.

Woe to them who die in mortal sin;

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy most
holy will,
For the second death shall do them no ill.
Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give Him thanks,
And be subject unto Him with great humility."

* * *

The most important compositions of St. Francis were the Rules of the Order, the first confirmed by Innocent III, in the early days of the organization, the second adopted by the Chapter of 1223, modifying the first. They are both interesting documents and of such vital consequence to the Franciscans, and the subject of so much contention, that they should be known to readers of Franciscan history. The second is reproduced here on account of its brevity.

SECOND RULE OF THE FRIARS MINOR

1—*In the Name of the Lord begins the life of the Minor Brothers.*

The Rule and life of the Minor Brothers is this, namely, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without property and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Honorius and to his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. And let the other brothers be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors.

[203]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

2—*Of those who wish to embrace this Life and how they ought to be Received.*

If any wish to embrace this life and come to our brothers, let them send them to their provincial ministers, to whom alone and not to others is accorded the power of receiving brothers. But let the ministers diligently examine them regarding the Catholic faith and the Sacraments of the Church. And if they believe all these things, and if they will confess them faithfully and observe them firmly to the end, and if they have no wives, or, if they have and their wives have already entered a monastery, or have, with the authority of the diocesan bishop, given them permission after having made a vow of continence, and if the wives be of such an age that no suspicion may arise concerning them, let them (the ministers) say to them the word of the holy Gospel, that they go and sell all their goods and strive to distribute them to the poor. If they should not be able to do this, their good will suffices. And the brothers and their ministers must take care not to be solicitous about their temporal affairs, that they may freely do with their affairs whatsoever the Lord may inspire them. If, however, counsel should be required, the ministers shall have power of sending them to some God-fearing men by whose advice their goods may be distributed to the poor. Afterwards let them give them clothes of probation, to wit: two tunics without a hood, and a cord and breeches and a chaperon reaching to the cord, unless at some time the same ministers may decide otherwise

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

according to God. The year of probation being finished, they shall be received to obedience, promising to observe always this life and rule. And according to the command of the Lord Pope in no wise shall it be allowed them to go out of this religion, because, according to the Holy Gospel: "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." And let those who have already promised obedience have one tunic with a hood, and if they wish it, another without a hood. And those who are obliged by necessity may wear shoes. And let all brothers be clothed in poor garments, and they may patch them with pieces of sackcloth and other things, with the blessing of God. I admonish and exhort them not to despise or judge men whom they see clothed in fine and showy garments, using dainty meats and drinks, but rather let each one judge and despise himself.

3—*Of the Divine Office, and of Fasting; and how the Brothers must go through the world.*

Let the clerics perform the Divine Office according to the Order of the Holy Roman Church, with the exception of the Psalter; wherefore they may have breviaries. But let the laics say twenty-four Paternosters for Matins; five for Lauds; for Prime, Tierce, Sext and Nones—for each of these, seven; for Vespers, however, twelve; for Compline, seven; and let them pray for the dead.

And let them fast from the feast of All Saints until the Nativity of the Lord. But the holy Lent which begins from Epiphany and continues for forty

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

days, which the Lord has consecrated by His holy fast— may those who keep it voluntarily be blessed by the Lord, and those who do not wish, may not be constrained. But they must fast during the other one until the Resurrection of the Lord. At other times, however, they shall not be obliged to fast, except on Fridays. But in time of manifest necessity the brothers shall not be bound to corporeal fasting.

I, indeed counsel, warn, and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that when they go through the world they be not litigious nor contend in words, nor judge others; but that they be gentle, peaceful, and modest, meek and humble, speaking honestly to all as is fitting. And they must not ride on horseback unless compelled by manifest necessity or infirmity. Into whatsoever house they may enter let them first say: Peace be to this house! And, according to the holy Gospel, it is lawful to eat of all foods which are set before them.

4—*That the Brothers must not receive money.*

I strictly enjoin on all the brothers that in no-wise they receive coins or money, either themselves or through an interposed person. Nevertheless, for the necessities of the sick and for clothing the other brothers, let the ministers and custodes alone take watchful care through spiritual friends, according to places and times and cold climates, as they shall see expedient in the necessity, saving always that, as has been said, they shall not receive coins or money.

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

5—*Of the manner of working.*

Let those brothers to whom the Lord had given the grace of working labor faithfully and devoutly, so that in banishing idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, to which all temporal things must be subservient. They may, however, receive as the reward of their labor, the things needful for the body for themselves and their brothers, with the exception of coins or money, and that humbly, as befits the servants of God and the followers of most holy poverty.

6—*That the Brothers shall appropriate nothing to themselves; and of seeking Alms and of the Sick Brothers.*

The brothers shall appropriate nothing to themselves, neither a house nor place nor anything. And as pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go confidently in quest of alms, nor ought they to be ashamed, because the Lord made Himself poor for us in this world. This, my dearest brothers, is the height of the most sublime poverty which has made you heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven; poor in goods, but exalted in virtue. Let that be your portion, for it leads to the land of the living; cleaving to it unreservedly, my best beloved brothers, for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, never desire to possess anything else under heaven.

And wheresoever the brothers are and may find themselves, let them mutually show among them-

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

selves that they are of one household. And let one make known his needs with confidence to the other, for, if a mother nourishes and loves her carnal son, how much more earnestly ought one to love and nourish his spiritual brother! And if any of them should fall into illness, the other brothers must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves.

7—*Of the Penance to be imposed on Brothers who sin.*

If any of the brothers, at the instigation of the enemy, sin mortally by those sins for which it has been ordained among the brothers that recourse should be had to the provincial ministers alone, the aforesaid brothers are bound to have recourse to them as soon as possible, without delay. But let the ministers themselves, if they are priests, impose penance on them with mercy; if, however, they are not priests, let them have it imposed by other priests of the Order, as it may seem to them most expedient, according to God. And they must beware lest they be angry or troubled on account of the sins of others, because anger and trouble impede charity in themselves and in others.

8—*Of the Election of the Minister General of this Brotherhood, and of the Whitsun Chapter.*

All the brothers are bound always to have one of the brothers of this religion as minister general and servant of the whole brotherhood, and they are strictly bound to obey him. At his death the election of a successor must be made by the provincial

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

ministers and custodes in the Whitsun Chapter, in which the provincial ministers are always bound to convene at the same time, wheresoever it may be appointed by the minister general, and that once in three years, or at a longer or shorter interval, as may be ordained by the said minister. And if at any time it should be apparent to the whole of the provincial ministers that the aforesaid minister general is not sufficient for the service and the common welfare of the brothers, let the aforesaid ministers, to whom the election has been committed, be bound to elect for themselves another as custos in the name of the Lord. But after the Whitsun Chapter the ministers and custodes may each, if they wish and it seem expedient to them, convoke their brothers to a chapter in their custodes once in the same year.

9—*Of Preachers.*

The brothers must not preach in the diocese of any bishop when their doing so may be opposed by him. And let no one of the brothers dare to preach in any way to the people, unless he has been examined and approved by the minister general of this brotherhood, and the office of preaching conceded to him by the latter. I also warn and exhort the same brothers that in the preaching they do their words be fire-tried and pure for the utility and edification of the people, announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity of speech because the Lord made His word short upon earth.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

10—*Of the Admonition and Correction of the Brothers.*

Those brothers who are ministers and servants of the other brothers, shall visit and admonish their brothers, and shall humbly and charitably correct them, not commanding them anything against their souls and our Rule. The brothers, however, who are subject must remember that, for God, they have renounced their own will. Wherefore I order them strictly to obey their ministers in all things which they have promised the Lord to observe, and are not against their souls and our Rule. And where-soever there are brothers we see and know that they are not able to observe the rule spiritually, they ought to and can recur to their ministers. And let the ministers receive them charitably and kindly and show so great familiarity toward them that they (the culprits) may speak and act with them as masters with their servants, for thus it ought to be, since the ministers are the servants of all the brothers.

I also warn and exhort the brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that they beware of all pride, vainglory, envy, covetousness, the cares and solitudes of this world, of detraction and murmuring. Let not those who are ignorant of letters care to learn letters, but let them consider that, beyond all, they should desire to possess the spirit of the Lord and His holy operation, to pray always to Him with a pure heart and to have humility, patience in persecution and an infirmity and to love those who persecute, reprove, and accuse us, because the Lord has said: "Love your enemies * * * and pray for them

FRANCISCAN LITERATURE

that persecute and calumniate you." "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for Justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved."

11—*That the Brothers must not enter the Monasteries of Nuns.*

I strictly command all the brothers not to have suspicious intimacy, or conferences with women, and let none enter the monasteries of nuns except those to whom special permission has been granted by the Apostolic See. And let them not be godfathers of men or women, that scandal may not arise on this account among the brothers or concerning the brothers.

12—*Of those who go among the Saracens and other Infidels.*

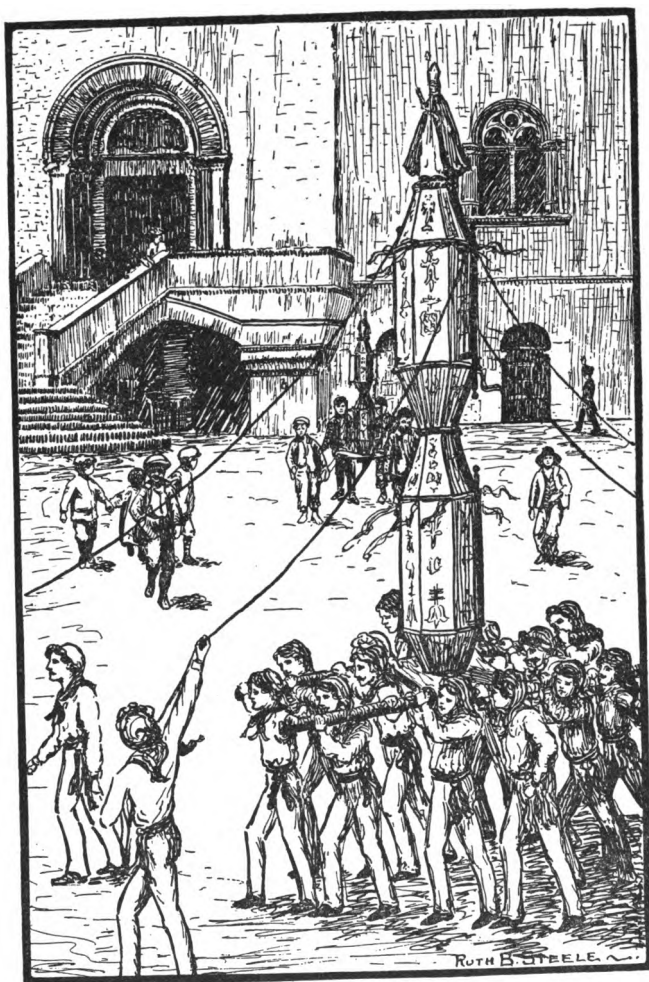
Let all of the brothers who by divine inspiration desire to go amongst the Saracens or other infidels, ask leave therefor from their provincial ministers. But the ministers must give permission to go to none except to those whom they see are fitted to be sent.

Moreover, I enjoin on the ministers, by obedience, that they ask of the Lord Pope one of the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church to be governor, protector, and corrector of this brotherhood, so that being always subject and submissive at the feet of the same holy Church, grounded in the Catholic faith, we may observe poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have firmly promised.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Sabatier has written, "The writings of St. Francis are assuredly the best source of acquaintance with him. It is true that they give little information as to his life, and furnish neither dates nor facts, but they do better, they mark the stages of his thought and of his spiritual development. His works show us his very soul; each phrase has not only been thought, but lived."

GUBBIO



CHAPTER VII

GUBBIO

Saint Francis' footsteps can be traced to many of the towns of the Umbrian valley. He and his followers made frequent visits to these places, and his coming was always anticipated, his face well known to the peasant folk.

Gubbio is often mentioned in the story of his life, and the town is so interesting that it may be worth our while to see it. Let us choose the fifteenth of May, the day of the annual celebration of the Feast of the Ceri.

A very old town is Gubbio, so they tell us, "one of the first five built in Italy after the flood," says the guide-book. "After the flood" is quite indefinite, but the tradition certainly establishes the antiquity of the place.

Tragic, too, is the history of Gubbio. Totila, the great general of the Goths, and Frederick Barbarossa were the destroyers of this portion of Italy, and Gubbio, with other cities fell before them, but this little town was too remote and unimportant to play a prominent part in Italian politics.

The location of Gubbio is not unlike that of Assisi, for it is built on the side of Monte Calvo, rising terrace above terrace upon the hilly slope. It is quite inaccessible by train, but the journey there by automobile from Perugia is altogether delightful.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The distance thither is thirty-five miles, and the way is steep, for there are three mountain ranges to be crossed. And such a journey! We ride along by the fields where the grain is growing, and the vines are swinging from tree to tree, in those wonderful Italian farms which are ever a joy to the eye; then skirt the olive vineyards or the bank of a stream, which we quickly leave far below as we climb the mountain, catching a fleeting view of the valley before we go coasting down the other side, trembling perhaps a little as we look ahead at the smooth, though narrow road and the yawning chasm so very, very near. Thus we ride for three hours, often reaching high altitudes, and our eyes are bewildered by the beauty of it all. We pass through many little hamlets, where the dogs bark, the chickens run crazily in our path, and the children flee to the protection of their mother's skirts as we sweep along the narrow streets and are gone.

I am thinking of days long ago, for St. Francis came this way once upon a time. Then the road was rough and stony. He wore sandals on his feet, and carried a staff in his hand; he rested at these very places, and the simple peasants gave him bread and walked with him down the hills, listening eagerly to his words, and kneeling at his feet for a parting blessing.

The town can be seen for quite a distance on its prominent plateau, but the road turns so frequently that we do not realize that we have arrived until we stop at the door of the simple inn. The streets are thronged with people from the neighboring

GUBBIO

towns, for it is a holiday. Everybody is happy and expectant, and we soon find ourselves mingling with the crowd, eagerly awaiting the coming events.

It is quite impossible for a Protestant and a foreigner to enter into the spirit of the religious feasts which are celebrated in the Catholic countries of Europe. They are profoundly interesting and often impressive, but not always uplifting in their effect upon the morals of the people, and most certainly a menace to the commercial interests. In Russia notably, after deducting the Sabbaths and feast days of the church, when all work is suspended, there remains less than two hundred and fifty days in the year for the transaction of business. Surely Russian manufacturers can never compete with those of other nations so long as this condition obtains, nor can she produce a high-grade workman when the labor must be interrupted so frequently by the inevitable holiday, which often brings so much of evil in the celebration.

The Feast of the Ceri at Gubbio is a harmless frolic, without deep significance either to the religious nature or intelligence of the participants; nevertheless it is well worth seeing. The origin of it is unknown. As the grain is ripening in the fields at this time of year, the thought of Ceres is suggested, but the word Cero is translated TAPER, and Ceri, TAPERS, so this solution must be dismissed; however, we will just enjoy it without knowing the meaning of it.

Very early in the morning of May fifteenth long processions of men, women and children may be

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

seen approaching Gubbio from every direction. The town is astir, for this is the day which will test her hospitality, and there must be no lack of cordiality in the greeting given to her neighbors. As this portion of Italy is an agricultural district, the majority of visitors are peasants. They are brown-hued sons and daughters of the soil, with eyes and hair as black as coal, their costumes careless, with many touches of bright color.

At eleven o'clock the town is quite alive, and if we would get the greatest enjoyment we must become citizens of Gubbio for the day, which we gladly do, joining the procession on its way through the narrow streets.

The Festival is a celebration in honor of the three patron saints of the village; St. Ubaldo, the favorite one who saved Gubbio from Barbarossa; St. Giorgio and St. Antonio. Life-sized figures of these saints are prepared and richly clothed; Ubaldo with white under-garments, long yellow robe and white mitre; Giorgio, caparisoned as a knight on horseback; and Antonio in somber black garments. These effigies are fastened in an upright position to the top of great lobed poles twenty feet long, which are gaily decorated with ribbons, tinsel and tiny bells. The poles are securely sunk into sockets on the top of huge standards from which project heavy cross-beams, which are borne on the shoulders of the carriers.

The three bands of Carriers are called Ceraïoli, and there are about forty stalwart young men in each group. Their costumes vary. The Menatori,

GUBBIO

or Masons, wear white trousers, red shirts, long colored sashes and Neapolitan red caps with tassels; they carry the standard of St. Ubaldo. The Nagozianti, or Traders, wear white trousers, blue shirts, sashes and caps, and carry St. Giorgio; the Contadini or Countrymen, dressed in pure white, carry St. Antonio.

At eleven o'clock the Ceraïoli assemble in three large halls for dinner. Long, narrow tables are erected along the four sides of the halls, the men sitting on low benches. Each man has brought his own plate with him tied up in a napkin. Huge tureens are placed on the tables, filled with a mixed pottage of macaroni and tiny fish; this with bread and wine completes the simple repast. There is no formality, every man dips into the dish and fills his plate full, eating ravenously, washing down the food with frequent bumpers of wine. Meanwhile crowds are surging into the halls and confusion reigns. A song is started, and the walls ring with wild melody. Men stand on chairs and with raised glasses shout in unison: *Evviva! Sant Ubaldo!* and the response is deafening. When a prominent citizen or an official enters the hall he is greeted with vociferous cheers. The warm Italian blood is surging and becoming inflamed with passionate enthusiasm by the wine. Our own pulses are beating more quickly, and we press ourselves out from the mob into a more secluded corner where we can survey it all more calmly and wonder at the strange characteristics which distinguish one nation from another. After the Ceraïoli have finished dining, the halls are par-

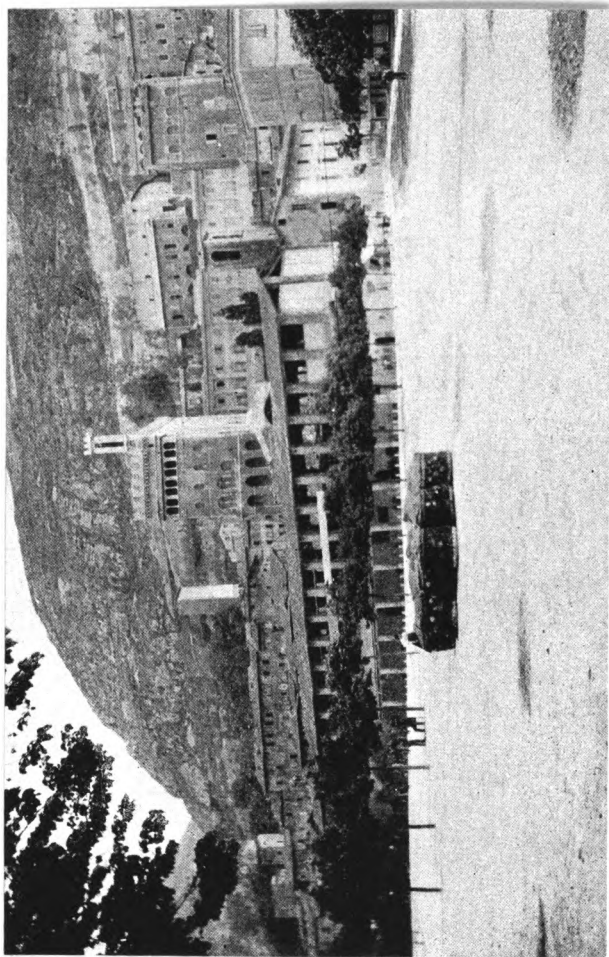
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

tially cleared, and the prominent men of the town with their guests sit down at other tables to a more elaborate and dignified banquet.

Leaving them to their feasting we walked about the old city, through the public gardens, stopping at the cathedral, where we found little to interest us save a lovely painting of the Madonna and Child by Nelli. The central figures are surrounded by saints and angels, and the Child seems to be dancing on the mother's knee to the accompaniment played by a graceful cherub on his viola.

The streets of Gubbio are narrow and steep. We climbed one of them, which led us up to the high plateau, the Piazza della Signoria which has been described as a "long artificial level built out from the hill slope upon mighty foundations of masonry." The piazza is protected on the town side by a high wall, over which we gazed on the animated scene below us, and the lovely valley and hills beyond. The large buildings on the piazza are the Museum and the Palazzo dei Consoli, or Municipio. The museum contains a few old pictures, some very beautiful Gubbio ware, which is exceedingly rare and a long forgotten art, and several famous Euginine bronze tablets found centuries ago, with inscriptions which nobody can translate.

The Municipio is a great Gothic structure, now unused, with a ponderous bell tower rising high in the air. The big bell is exposed to view, and as we gazed at it we were surprised to see a number of men attempting to swing it by hand. It was too high from the ground for us to see the mechanism of it,



GUBBIO AND MONTE CALVO
From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

we could only know that the task was a difficult and dangerous one, for the combined strength of all the men failed to move it for several moments. Then slowly it began to swing, gaining in motion a little, the human machine straining every muscle, encouraged by the shouts of the crowds below. Finally by its own momentum it swung gloriously, the big clapper struck the side and the boom sounded forth over the valley. Then came replies from every bell tower in Gubbio, and from the little villages beyond, making the air vibrant with the diapason of sound.

Soon we heard shouting from the streets below, and looking over the parapet, saw a crowd gathering in the square. Hurrying down we met the bands of Ceraïoli rushing through the streets, the standards on their shoulders. The house of every prominent citizen was visited by them, and while the procession paused a few moments, the figures of the saints were bent in salutation, bestowing a blessing upon the household. These visitations were rewarded later by gifts of wine. This portion of the celebration was quickly ended, the big standards were deposited in a side street, and the Ceraïoli, with a free afternoon before them, started off on a round of revelry.

We took advantage of the time to explore that part of the town which we had not already seen. As usual, we found our greatest joy in watching the people, and we came in closer contact with rural Italy in Gubbio than in any other place. How delightful are these Italian peasants! How light-hearted, joyous, simple, courteous and kind! We

GUBBIO

have loved them from afar, and now mingling with them on this happy festal day, we love them even more.

We were piloted about by a polite, well-dressed lad, who much to our surprise, refused a silver piece when he bade us good-bye.

The town was full of life all the afternoon. Bands of Ceraïoli marched through the streets from curb to curb singing and shouting boisterously. They were over-stimulated with much wine, although not intoxicated, but it was safer to keep the way clear before them. Sometimes two bands would meet and a lively skirmish would ensue; but all in fun, and with no ill will they would proceed on their way, each one trying to annihilate the other with its ear-splitting songs.

Thus passed the afternoon until six o'clock, when all the people hastened toward the cathedral, standing along both sides of the steep street leading to the entrance. The Ceraïoli, with standards raised stood at the top of the hill. The air was filled with expectancy as the great doors swung open, and the aged Archbishop followed by a long procession of priests, full-robed and bearing their banners, emerged and marched slowly up the hill. When they reached the summit, they turned into a narrow street, the Bishop raising his hand in blessing on the Ceri. As the last of the church procession passed, a mighty shout arose, and in a moment the three bands of Ceraïoli with their standards on high came running down the incline at full speed. The noise was deafening and the confusion indescribable. The

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

people were massed solidly on the narrow sidewalks and in the doorways, and our position was perilous, for woe to anyone who might be pushed into the path of that wild racing throng. But it was all over in a moment, and then everybody rushed for the Piazza della Signoria to await the arrival of the Ceraïoli. In an incredibly short time the great square was filled with people, and not an inch of space remained on the steps of the Municipio. We were fortunately invited to enter one of the adjoining palaces facing on the piazza, and from one of the upper windows looked down upon a most remarkable sight.

There were four or five thousand excited people in the square, dancing, singing and waiting for the great climax of the celebration. There was an abundance of color too, which added to the picturesqueness of the scene, the like of which could never be found outside Italy.

The procession of the Ceri meanwhile had been passing through the streets of the town, and soon its approach was made known by the arrival of a captain on horseback, who rode into the piazza, and with drawn sword pressed the people back against the walls of the buildings, leaving a great open space in the center. The band began to play, the bells were ringing, the crowd cheered, and in a moment the Ceraïoli came swinging into the square. Three times around they raced with tremendous speed, the standards creaking and bending, the figures of the saints swaying, and I never before saw a crowd worked up into such a frenzy of excitement.

GUBBIO

It was almost painful to watch the Ceraïoli. Their faces were crimson with the heat, their eyes wild with the tumult of the day. When one fell from the ranks exhausted, another quickly took his place; if they had been charging in battle against an enemy they could not have been more reckless or more in earnest.

The important feature of this part of the celebration was to substitute new and younger men who should act as Ceraïoli the following year. It was their difficult task to push their way into the tracks of the racers, one by one, transferring the burden of the heavy standards to their shoulders, permitting the others to step aside, and all this to be accomplished while running at full speed. It required great skill and strength to do this without serious accident, but so far as we could see it was safely done, and the young Ceraïoli thus receiving their initiation, were entitled to hold this office of honor until the next year, when they in turn, should relinquish it to their successors.

Almost before we knew it the race was ended, and the procession left the piazza, the crowd following. We made our way to the public gardens to watch the closing event of the festival.

Far on the summit of Monte Calvo we saw a group of convent buildings, and were informed that the Ceri must be deposited therein as the last act of the day, and remain there until May the fifteenth comes again. Surely we thought, those poor exhausted Ceraïoli cannot climb that steep ascent to-night! But even as we gazed, we saw the head of the column

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

emerge from behind a rock, crawling along like a great serpent, then it disappeared, to be seen again in a few moments a little nearer the summit; and so it continued for half an hour, until the distance and the growing dusk obscured our vision, and we knew that for us the festival was at an end. The long automobile ride homeward through the twilight was very beautiful, and when the darkness settled down upon us, from every hilltop, far and near, there flamed up a great bonfire, sending forth a silent salutation to Gubbio in honor of her festal day.

GIOTTO



RUTH B. STEELE

CHAPTER VIII

GIOTTO

Writing a history of a thirteenth century artist is a task beset with many difficulties. Biographical writers were almost unknown, and the meager information existing to-day has been gathered laboriously from manuscripts of doubtful authority.

In the sixteenth century Vasari gained a wide reputation with his series of "Artists Lives" and he has been freely quoted by almost every writer on art, but always with many reservations regarding his reliability.

The lives of artists are not of real importance in summing up our final criticism of their work. It is interesting to follow closely the life of the soldier, the statesman, the scholar, or the ruler, because they give themselves to the world. They mix with men and grapple with the daily problems of life, therefore we learn to know them intimately and well. But it is not always so with the artist; he is elusive, he lives apart, withdraws himself, while through the days he paints alone in his studio, or high up on the scaffolding adorns the ceiling of some chapel. It is true that he gives himself, but through the medium of his creation. The world thinks little of him or of his life; it is his art which must meet the criticism and stand the test, and his personality must be partially obliterated in his work.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The advance of Italian art in the early years of the thirteenth century "was an advance through the development of the imposed Byzantine pattern. When people began to stir intellectually, the artists found that the old Byzantine model did not look like nature. They began, not by rejecting it, but by improving it."

Restlessness was the prevailing condition throughout Italy at this period in all matters pertaining to the intellect, to art and to religion. There were signs of an awakening, but it could not yet be said that: "Former things have passed away and all things have become new."

The artists continued to be conservative, not having the courage to divorce themselves entirely from the long established rules and methods of the Italo-Byzantine school. Very timorously they began by painting more flowing drapery, slightly changing the poise of the head, or position of the hands, but the sad, oval face and almond eyes remained.

Slowly and by degrees centers of art appeared at Siena, Pisa, Lucca, Arezzo and Florence, and fortunately the newly dedicated Church of San Francesco at Assisi offered a most inviting field for the ambitious and struggling artists of these cities.

Some of the frescoes on the walls of San Francesco are said to have been among the best examples of the work of the painters of that early day, and many critics have placed Cimabue in the front rank, as the chief exponent of the advancing ideas, even claiming for him so pronounced a position as the founder of a new school, and the "Father of Italian Art."

GIOTTO

Cimabue was a mysterious person. The date and place of his birth are unknown, and even his existence is denied for lack of proof, but we will assume that he lived and was born about the year 1240. His name is held in veneration in Italy to-day, and when approaching one of the few paintings of his which still exists, the guide announces the title with considerable awe as you stand before it. But, as the years have passed by, in the general adjustment of opinion, Cimabue has found his place among the company of those artists of his day, who brought about a little improvement in Byzantine art.

His greatest picture was the Madonna and Child now in the Rucellai Chapel, Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. According to tradition, Cimabue was very sensitive to criticism, and would frequently destroy a picture without completing it if anyone said aught against it. He therefore painted this picture in solitude, keeping it carefully covered when visitors came to his studio. It created a sensation when completed, and was carried through the streets of Florence in a long procession, with music and shouts of rejoicing.

It is a panel picture of large dimensions, painted on wood, badly disfigured by the ravages of time. There is grace and sweetness in the figure of the Madonna, and the child looks lovable, although the face is too mature; the angels' faces on the frame are very beautiful, and the little color remaining is most delicate. It is the Byzantine model, however, with the full figure draped from head to foot, the side bending head, and the long tapering fingers.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Cimabue's reputation thus securely established, he was eagerly sought as instructor by the young art students of the day, and much luster has accrued to his name as the master of Giotto. He could teach him little, however, save the rudimentary elements of art, for his pupil early developed a style of his own. Giotto was to become a Liberator.

We know little of Cimabue's life. It is said that he was arrogant, self-confident and conceited. He died in 1302, and above his tomb is inscribed the epitaph: "Cimabue thought himself master of the field of painting; while living he was so; now he holds his place among the stars of heaven." But a few years later Dante wrote in his "Purgatorio": "Cimabue thought to lord it over painting's field; and now the cry is Giotto's, and his name eclipsed."

* * *

No accurate account of Giotto's early life has been preserved. Giotto di Bondone was his full name. He was born at Colle, a small town north of Florence, and authorities do not agree as to the date of his birth. The year 1276 is usually given, accompanied by the inevitable (?) of the period, and there are good reasons for believing that the date may have been a few years earlier, for some of his best pictures were painted in the nineties, which would have made him very youthful to have won such renown.

At an early age the lad developed a fondness for drawing, and we are at liberty to choose between the two accounts of his acquaintance with Cimabue.

[236]



MADONNA AND CHILD—Cimabue
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

One day while tending sheep in the field, Cimabue passing by, saw the boy drawing the figures of animals on the rocks with a sharp-edged stone, and being impressed with his skill, sought out his father and persuaded him to send Giotto to his studio for instruction. This does not appeal to me at all, and I would have serious doubts of Cimabue's mentality, if it were true, for of all objects that Giotto painted, his animals are to me the most unnatural and wooden. However, the shepherd boy Giotto, lying on the hillside caring for his father's sheep, forms a picture not at all unpleasing to our fancy. The loveliness of the landscape spread out before him must have awakened longings and desires which, after many years, found expression in his paintings. The sense of the beautiful must have entered his soul as he lay there musing. His eye sweeping the horizon saw all the diversifications of a fair landscape composed of mountains and valleys, meadows and hillsides and running streams. All was calm and repose, inanimate too, save the passing cloud, the swaying treetop and placidly flowing river. Withdrawing his far-off gaze, his eyes would fall upon the sheep nibbling the grass at his feet. Unconsciously perhaps, he would pick up a pointed stone, and on a flat, rocky surface close at hand, attempt to draw one of the shaggy animals, and although the effort was a caricature, there was born within him the longing to be a painter.

The other story tells us that Giotto was apprenticed to a wool-worker, and that the task was distasteful to him. He often absented himself, and



MADONNA AND CHILD—Giotto
Reproduction from a Brogi photograph.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

was invariably found at Cimabue's studio watching him work, with eager eyes. And now the wise father, the sensible parent, instead of seeking to crush the waking talent in his son, cheerfully yielded his wishes to the boy's pleadings and the artist's advice, and Giotto thus became Cimabue's pupil.

Giotto's relations with Cimabue were doubtless intimate and pleasant, yet the older man must have revolted at times, as the independence of the young student began to assert itself. Cimabue's vision was narrow and confined. There were no models in those days, nor did the artists paint from nature. The master could only teach the boy steadiness of hand, the mixing of colors, and the crude ideas of the prevailing art. And then, maybe, he would give Giotto a picture of the Madonna to copy, stiff and awkward, or the Crucifixion, bloody and despairing. I can see the young man at his easel about to begin his task. There is a bright light in his eye, his cheeks are flushed, there are wrinkles on his brow, all of which indicates that there is a little rebellion in his heart. So he broadens the Madonna's oval face, paints her head erect, shortens the long slender fingers, and instead of the close-fitting hood, permits the drapery to fall back over one shoulder revealing the hair, and the soft white undergarment, which serves to lighten up the face.

There are in Florence two paintings of the Madonna and Child, the one Cimabue's in the Rucellai Chapel, the other, Giotto's in the Belle Arti, in which are shown the strongly contrasting styles of the artists, the disappearing Byzantine and the

GIOTTO

emerging realistic. The former seems dark and gloomy, while the latter is light and cheerful. Giotto's figure of the *bambino*, while more correctly drawn, is not more pleasing to look upon, and his angels do not excel Cimabue's in beauty, although the two figures kneeling before the Madonna, with their offerings of lilies, are more expressive in their devotion. Taken as a whole, Giotto's picture shows quite an advance over the art of that early period.

I can imagine Giotto presenting his finished work to the master with a rather defiant air, and awaiting his criticism. That Cimabue was kind, we may assume, for the two worked together peacefully until death came to separate them. Giotto was but twenty-six when his friend died, and had already acquired no small reputation among his townspeople. He was the natural successor of Cimabue, and many young students came to him for instruction. He founded a new school of art in Florence, which flourished for nearly a hundred and fifty years, and his followers, Taddeo Gaddi, Agnolo Gaddi, Giotto, Orcagna and Spinello Aretino, carried his methods and style down into the early years of the fifteenth century. "Art was first called Italian when Giotto came. Those who came immediately after him did not equal him. Ghirlandajo was the link between him and Angelo, Raphael and Leonardo."

Giotto's private life was quiet and uneventful. Contemporary writers have little to say about it, but we can gather enough to learn that he lived in

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Florence much of the time, that his studio (if his modest workshop may be called by so dignified a name) was there, that he inherited a small estate at Vespignano, a village near Florence, and that this was his favorite place of abode. He loved the country and, after his many absences, was happy to return for rest to this quaint retreat. He was prosperous and frugal, of simple habits, unprepossessing in appearance, genial and kindly, of happy disposition, brilliant of wit and in repartee. He was strong, rugged, independent, thoughtful and earnest in his attitude toward the world, a busy man, devoted to his calling. Honored and esteemed by his fellow townsmen, he was considered a desirable friend by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. His family consisted of his wife and eight children. One of the boys followed his father's profession, another became a priest. His daughters married into well-to-do families in Vespignano.

Numerous writers have linked together the names of Dante and Giotto, and it is pleasing to believe that the two men were acquainted, and that probably a friendship existed between them. They were born about the same time, Dante in Florence, Giotto in a town near by. According to tradition both were students of Cimabue, and to Giotto was ascribed the famous portrait of Dante on the walls of the Bargello, but that fancy has been dispelled. It will be recalled that Dante praised Giotto in his "Purgatorio." They met in Rome during jubilee year 1300, and a few years later both were in Padua.

The lives of Dante and Giotto present strong

GIOTTO

contrasts, the one storm-tossed by political tempests, the other quiet and peaceful. Both, however, were idealists, and the spirit of the Renaissance sent forth by St. Francis of Assisi a generation before, was in the heart of each. They had much in common, too. They were the greatest artists of their day, one drawing his figures, filling them in with richest coloring, telling a story for the first time through the medium of his art; the other painting his word pictures, so sublime, that today, after six hundred years, the world stands before them in awe. Dante loved Florence with all his soul and would gladly have given his life for her. Giotto was a Florentine by preference only. His affection for the city was not strong enough to draw him into its struggles, and he cared not at all whether commissions came from Neri or Bianchi; he could work on unconcernedly at his Santa Croce frescoes, while just without the door men were cutting each other's throats. He had no inclination to follow Dante into the mazy paths of politics and statecraft, he only desired to be left alone on his scaffold with his pictures. Yet, passively or actively, both were men of peace, for Dante's dearest wish was the fulfillment of the great dream which did not come to pass until the days of Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel.

Dante died in exile, alone, unhonored. Giotto died among friends, his last years filled with praise, and favors from pope and king. Yet Dante's fame will endure long after Giotto's frescoes have faded away and disappeared, for words are indestructible.

Giotto sometimes indulged in writing, and it is

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

rather singular that the only example remaining is a song or satire on Voluntary Poverty. This was probably suggested by his careful study of St. Francis' life, and while we cannot doubt his admiration for the saint, he could not accept his views of poverty. The song condemns poverty as a source of evil, and voluntary poverty as contrary to the teaching of Jesus.

“Many are they who praise Poverty,
And such say that it is a perfect state
(If it is approved and chosen),
To observe its rule and possess nothing.
But sure authority leads us to this;
That to observe it would be too stringent,
And taking that saying,
That rarely is there an extreme without vice,
It seems to me, if I understand it, a harsh extreme,
And therefore I do not commend it.
And to make a good building
One should so provide from the foundation,
That it should stand firm against
Force of wind or any other thing,
So that there is no need to alter it afterwards.

Of the poverty which is against the will,
There is no doubt that it is altogether evil,
For it is the way of sin,
Making judges to give false judgments,
Spoiling women and maidens of honour,
Causing thefts, violences, and villainies,
And often using lies.

GIOTTO

And it deprives every one of an honorable home,
So that in a short time
Wanting possessions you will seem also to want
sense.

Whosoever is approached by Poverty,
Even if (like Camillus) he has defeated Brennus,
Will at once show fight,
Wishing that it might not confront him,
For even in thinking on it he already blenches.

Of that poverty which seems to be by choice,
One can see by sure experience
That without any doubt
It is observed or not, not as it is pretended;
And even the observance of it is not to be praised,
Since it needs neither discretion nor knowledge,
Nor any excellence
Of customs or virtues.
Certes, I think it is a shame,
To call that virtue which extinguishes a good,
And much harm comes
Of preferring a beastlike quality to those virtues
Which give salvation,
Acceptable to every wise understanding;
The more so according as he is more worthy.

Here you may oppose an argument:
Our Lord commends Poverty much.
See that you understand Him well,
For His words are very profound,
And have sometimes a double meaning;
And He wills us to take the wholesome one.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Therefore, unveil your eyes,
And look at the truth which hides within.
You will see that His words
Correspond to His holy life;
For He had power adequate
To every occasion and place.
And therefore His having little
Was in order that we should shun avarice,
And not to find us a way to use cunning.
We often see evidently
That he who most praises that life has no peace,
And always studies and procures
How he may depart from that condition.
If honour and great state is committed to him,
He grips it tight, the rapacious wolf;
And well he counterfeits
So that he may fulfil his desire,
And knows how to cover himself
So that, beneath the false cloak,
The worst wolf looks the best lamb.
This hypocrisy, if it does not soon go under,
Will leave no part in the world
For those who do not use its arts."

It is quite impossible to relate the events in Giotto's life in chronological order. We really have no starting point, but in the year 1298 all agree that he was in Rome, where he executed important commissions. He may have decorated a portion of the old basilica of St. Peters, but if so, it has disappeared long ago. He was the recipient of many honors during his sojourn in Rome, mingling with the

GIOTTO

distinguished guests of Pope Boniface, and was sought with eagerness by the young artists.

Many months were consumed in painting the extensive series at Assisi and Padua. He painted freely in Florence, and there may be more of his work still hidden under the whitewashed walls of Santa Croce. He decorated, possibly, the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa. He doubtless traveled much and rested often at Vespignano, and in 1330 we find him at Naples, the guest of King John, patron of art and friend of Petrarch and Boccaccio. He received marked attention in Naples, painted the hall of the king's palace, the chapel, and decorated one of the churches, but none of these remain.

It is believed that he executed his last commission in Milan in 1335, having been called there to decorate the Ducal Palace. At the conclusion of this work he returned to Florence. His mind must have been filled with the conception of the beautiful campanile which was just appearing above its foundations; but he was not to see it progress very far, for he died in January, 1337, after a short illness, and was buried in the cathedral.

Many years after, Lorenzo di Medici placed a marble bust on his tomb and ordered an epitaph composed, which, while containing the truth, sounds strangely grandiloquent as falling from the lips of so plain and modest a man as Giotto di Bondone:

“Lo, I am he by whom dead Painting was
restored to life, to whose right hand all
was possible, by whom Art became one

[247]

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

with Nature. No one ever painted more or better. Do you wonder at yon fair Tower which holds the sacred bells? Know that it was I who bade her first rise towards the stars. For I am Giotto—what need is there to tell of my work? Long as verse lives, my name shall endure!”

Giotto, the student and instructor in Florence, began his work in a circumscribed school, for art had been the slave of the church for centuries and few paintings existed outside the walls of the churches. Almost as much time and thought began to be given to the interior as to the architectural effect. The decoration was a part of the “church furniture” and was employed to illustrate and supplement the teaching of the priests. The doors of the churches were always open and the people were passing in and out all day. Religion made its strongest appeal to them through the senses, rather than through the intellect, and figures of the Madonna and pictures on the walls were the recipients of the adoration of their simple minds and hearts.

The average artist of the day was little more than a workman, nearly all his commissions coming from the church. He was merely employed to copy the set figures which had been handed down from one generation to another. It must be recognized that art as yet existed for religion’s sake, and it was not until late in the sixteenth century when the power of the church began to wane, and world

GIOTTO

interests were awakening, that artists sought other fields of effort and came under new influences.

Giotto, however, did not recognize this restriction. To him belongs the distinction of having created about himself an atmosphere of freedom, of art for art's sake, and of having successfully maintained himself in this freedom. He was the first artist to tell a story with his brush, and this innovation was largely responsible for his success. His dramatic force was intense and he used it most effectively in his pictures. There is movement and action in his figures, but it is a little pathetic to see his attempts to introduce into the paintings the barren rocks and awkward trees, retained in his memory, perhaps, from the days of his hillside visions.

Interpretation of distance and perspective in art were little known in his time, otherwise we might have looked for reproductions of nature from Giotto, but the age of the landscape painter did not come for many years, and we must wait for Poussin, and Claude Lorrain, and later still for Constable, for whom "rustic life furnished inspiration and material."

Giotto was a well educated man, familiar with Latin and Greek, and a careful student of sacred history. His pictures reveal an intimate knowledge of the life of the Virgin Mary, of Jesus, of St. John the Evangelist, and of John the Baptist. He was just in the prime of his vigorous young manhood when Italy was being searched from north to south for artists of note to decorate the walls of the great church of San Francesco at Assisi. Doubtless he

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

was indebted to Cimabue for the summons to join this noted company, for we find him working industriously in the Lower Church by the side of his master. We cannot tell whether the life and teachings of St. Francis had made any impression upon Giotto previous to this time, but we do know that from this period they became important factors in his career, therefore, let us not forget the influence of St. Francis as we see the unfoldings of the new art. The life of the saint was poetic and aesthetic. He possessed the poet's soul, and the poet's instinct; the events of his career were dramatic and often tragic, and when the writers of his day began to tell his story, they embellished the pages with the poet's language, awakening perhaps in the heart of Italy dramatic and poetical yearnings, maturing later in the brain of Giotto, Dante and Petrarch.

Only a generation had passed by since the death of St. Francis when Giotto began his career, but the life of the saint had been chronicled and had found its place in the literature of Italy. His influence was waning, his ideals had been shattered, but he was to live again in the hearts of the people through the skill and imagination of the artist. Bonaventura with his pen, and Giotto with his brush, kept the memory of St. Francis alive, until the sweetness and beauty of his life gained greater recognition.

Giotto's ideas expressed in his pictures were not always original. In the series from the life of St. Francis he really reproduced the word pictures of Bonaventura, but his great power consisted in his

GIOTTO

grouping, his remarkable composition, and in his ability, as Berenson says, to "stimulate the tactile imagination, as no artist had ever done before him, and in which few have excelled him since." In other words, he makes his creations so realistic that one almost feels that the scenes which are represented are being enacted before his eyes. By a gesture of the hand, a bend of the body, a turn of the head, or an expression of the face, he seems to put life and motion into the inanimate painted figures, so that they become actual participants in the drama.

His art was pictorial and illustrative, and when one stops to consider that the art which preceded him was neither, one is more than ever impressed with his broad vision and talent. His art was Christian, and he used its appealing qualities with all the power at his command, but he did not divorce it from the material, for he made the work of earth quite as important as the glory of heaven, and his men and women were quite as robust as his angels were ethereal.

It must have been an inspiration to Giotto to have known that he was an educator, and much religious fervor entered into his work as his stories unfolded upon the walls of the churches of Assisi and the Arena Chapel.

Our sources of information accord to Giotto universal praise and admiration. The ablest art critics, Vasari, Ruskin, Jamieson, Perkins, Berenson and Crowe, place him among the foremost artists the world has produced. Heinrich Woefflein, professor

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

of art history at Berlin University, pays him this beautiful tribute: "Italian painting begins with Giotto. It was he who loosened the tongue of art. What he painted has a voice, and what he relates becomes an experience. He explored the wide circle of human emotion, he discoursed of sacred history and the legends of the saints, and everywhere of actual living things. The heart of the incident is always plucked out, the scene, with its effect upon the beholder, is always brought before us, just as it must have taken place. Giotto, like the preachers and poets of the school of St. Francis of Assisi, undertook to expound the sacred story and to elucidate it by intimate details; but the essence of his achievement is to be found, not in poetic invention, but in pictorial presentment, in the rendering of things that no one had hitherto been able to give in painting. He had an eye for the speaking elements of a scene, and perhaps painting never made such a sudden advance in expressive power as in his time. Giotto must not be looked upon as a kind of Christian Romantic who bore about in his pocket the outpourings of a Franciscan brother, and whose art had blossomed under the inspiration of that infinite love, by which the Saint of Assisi drew heaven down to earth, and made the world an Eden. He was no enthusiast, but a man of realities; no poet, but an observer; an artist who is never carried away by the ardour of his eloquence, but whose speech is always limpid and expressive. His popularity will never wane, for all can understand him."

GIOTTO

Much depends upon the attitude of mind and point of view in all criticism. No critic can speak authoritatively on Giotto unless he has carefully studied the conditions of the time in which he lived, for he was the founder of a new school of art, and an innovation of such importance does not come by chance.

As Giotto's fame increased, commissions came to him from many sources. While doubtless his subjects were chosen for him, the day of the art patron had not arrived, and he was spared the painting to order to please a monarch's whim, thus escaping the jealousies and heartaches of many of the artists who followed him.

Browning has this situation in mind when referring to del Sarto, he makes Angelo say to Raphael:

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"

This quotation gives us an insight into later conditions, and one can readily see the immense advantage, pecuniary at least, accruing to those who were fortunate enough to secure royal patronage. No court was complete without its artist, and oftentimes it must have required much strength of character on the part of the painter to resist the temptation to flatter, and thus belittle his art.

Giotto was a prolific painter, and while many of his pictures have long ago disappeared, many have been

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

preserved through the trying processes of restoration. His greatest works, which have withstood the ravages of time, are now in Assisi, Padua and Florence. Outside these cities a very limited number remain. A careful catalogue compiled by Mr. F. Mason Perkins, mentions a panel in the Louvre, two at Munich, two at Alnwick Castle, the home of the Duke of Northumberland, and one in Boston, the possession of Mrs. J. L. Gardner. Rome has only an altar-piece and the fragment of a mosaic.

Without attempting any critical or even chronological study, let us approach Giotto's paintings as they have been preserved for us at Assisi, Padua and Florence.

GIOTTO AT ASSISI



CHAPTER IX

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

The Church of San Francesco at Assisi must have been almost bewildering in its richness of decoration before time began its work of destruction. The most renowned artists of the period, Cimabue, Simone Martini, Giotto, Lo Spagna, Lorenzetti and Giotto were called to aid in beautifying the great temple which had been built to commemorate the saint. The archives of the church do not contain any record of the paintings. The work was done about the year 1300, and we have excellent authority for the statement that Giotto painted in the Lower Church the scenes from the Life of Christ:—The Annunciation—The Visitation—The Nativity—The Adoration of the Kings—The Presentation—The Flight into Egypt—Massacre of the Innocents—Christ Disputing with the Doctors—Return of Christ with His Parents from the Temple, and The Crucifixion.

This series is not our painter's best work, but contains the characteristics which made him famous. One of his charms is his lightness of color, the soft blues, pinks, yellows and greens blend so delicately and form the most beautiful decoration. It is quite amazing, too, to see as one approaches nearer, the smoothness of finish. Giotto's drawing of the human figure and of animals was quite defective.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

His men and women are very large and heavy, the faces, generally speaking, full and coarse, their garments cumbersome and unwieldy, and exceedingly plain. We can find very little grace and no elegance in the groups standing stiffly about, but occasionally this is relieved by a stately figure full of beauty.

Ruskin said of Giotto that an element of his strength lay in his power to substitute gestures for conventional attitudes, and incidents of every-day life for conventional circumstances. He did not possess more learning than others of his day, nor had he made any great discoveries of new theories of art, but he was interested in what was going on around him. Thus he became a "daring naturalist, in defiance of tradition, idealism and formalism."

Giotto's pictures suffer greatly in reproductions in engravings and photographs, for their crudenesses cannot be concealed; but the lovely coloring supplies the subduing tone and quality, and we forget the imperfections.

Turning again to the pictures in the Lower Church, let us study some of them in detail.

"The Nativity of Jesus." In this painting Giotto introduces the novelty of combining several events occurring at different places. At the top of the fresco two groups of angels are seen singing their hallelujahs and gazing at the bright star; on the right are two shepherds tending their flock and listening with frightened faces to the announcement of the angel messenger. In the center of the picture is a rude, open shed, and under the roof are sheltered



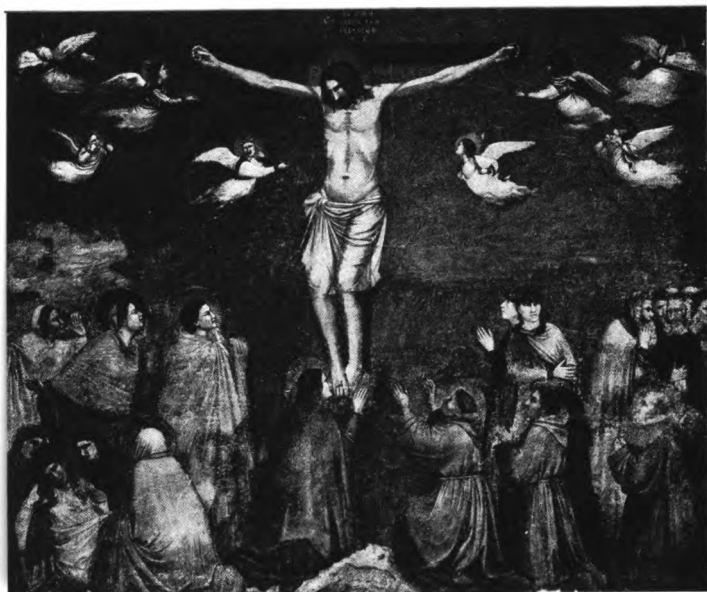
THE NATIVITY—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Mary and the Child, angels, a cow and a donkey; on the ground below them is Joseph, wondering and disconsolate, and another figure of the *bambino* in the hands of two servants, in the process of bathing.

In "The Flight into Egypt," Mary is the central figure. Seated upon the ass, she is holding the child in her arms, and looking down upon him with tenderness. Joseph goes before, leading the animal and looks back upon the mother with solicitude; two angels are hovering in the air to show the way, and behind are two attendants, one prodding the animal, the other carrying a water-jar upon his head. The whole picture is full of motion and one needs not to be told that a journey is being undertaken.

"The Crucifixion" is a much more elaborate picture, and must have been a revelation to those who had seen only the Byzantine types. Its composition is quite wonderful, no less than thirty figures being painted, every one of which seems necessary to make the scene complete. The central figure is the Saviour, stretched upon the cross. While the drawing does not offend, the picture is lacking in perspective and the body seems a little out of proportion by its extraordinary length, but it is full of dignity and calm repose. The head is drooping upon the breast, the features nearly hidden from view. Eight angels flutter about the cross, their faces distorted with grief; two of them catch the blood dripping from the Saviour's hands, another, the blood gushing from His side. Mary Magdalene is kneeling at the foot of the cross, at her left are two groups of women, one ministering



THE CRUCIFIXION—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

to the Virgin who has swooned, the other gazing with adoration upon the face of the dead Christ. On the right are a number of priests who seem to be discussing the event, two soldiers, and several figures kneeling in the garb of saints, the foremost bearing the features of St. Francis of Assisi.

This fresco is one of Giotto's masterpieces; he never excelled the production in later years, and there are those who believe that the Crucifixion has never been more impressively painted; it far surpasses, by its solemnity, the more theatrical representations of a later day. He has avoided the moment of the storm and earthquake, as related in the scriptures, he has not even painted the wrangling soldiers dividing the Saviour's garments, but has chosen a more quiet time, when the rabble has departed, leaving Christ almost alone with the few who loved Him best.

In some of the pictures of this series Giotto has used architectural effects almost obtrusively. He seemed to take delight in framing his figures in gracefully arched doorways, or filling up his backgrounds with masses of towers and temples. We must let our imagination have full sway now, or we would wonder a little at the utility of the buildings, for the lack of perspective often gives the impression that the people are too large for their houses, yet there is a daintiness of drawing in the structures which is pleasing, and on the whole, preferable to the strange landscapes which were employed by the artists who came after him.

On the ceiling above the high altar Giotto painted four great frescoes, three of them allegories, repre-

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

senting the Vows of the Franciscan Order—Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, the fourth, the Glorification of St. Francis.

These allegories are unique in the annals of painting and the most important of Giotto's pictures. The artist has overcome the difficulties of the curved surface and executed the scheme of decoration harmoniously and effectively. We wonder from whence came sufficient light to guide him in his painting, for even in the bright sun of noonday the figures are far from distinct. The first impression one receives is of a mass of light-robed ethereal beings floating in a hazy atmosphere toward a central point where the four panels meet. The colors are exquisitely mellow; faint blues, pinks, whites, and greys. Gradually our gaze is focused upon each fresco, and our interest is awakened by the strange interpretation conceived by the imagination of the artist. Vasari attributes it to Dante's influence, but the *Paradiso* had not been written, and the acquaintance between the two possibly not begun.

Roger Fry, in all that he has written of Giotto, shows a very keen appreciation of the beauty of the artist's work. It is interesting then to read these lines: "The allegories on the central vault of the lower church give us a more complete idea of Giotto's powers as a painter than any other work. The physical sensation of pleasure when one first looks up at these is scarcely to be obtained elsewhere; long before one has unravelled the doctrinal teaching which was their *raison d'être*, before one has even made out the separate figures of the composition, one

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

is overcome with purely sensuous satisfaction at the sight of so marvellous a surface. Upon the dusky blue of the vault, float on all sides figures robed in golden rose and greenish umbrous white, while pale pink towers shoot up towards the center; the ravishing beauty of the colour is intimately associated with the tenderness of the tone contrasts, the atmospheric envelopment. In looking at these one realizes that fresco in the hands of an artist like Giotto can yield a surface more entrancing, more elusively and mysteriously beautiful than any other medium painters have discovered. The effect is as of evanescent forms appearing through a roseate mist, and yet without loss of definition. Among modern painters, Mr. Whistler has, in some of his portraits, where a generalized form floats before a grey background, got something of this effect; but, judged by their purely sensuous qualities, these frescoes appear to me more exquisite. It is necessary to insist on this, because most of Giotto's frescoes have lost so much of their original surface quality, that one is apt to think of him as a great interpreter only and not as one of the greatest of mere painters, gifted with a supreme aptitude for sensuous delight."

As we look at these allegories let us forget for the moment that Giotto was hired and paid to decorate the ceiling, for their materialistic worth sinks into insignificance when compared with their artistic and moral values. Impressive as each allegory is in itself, we cannot appreciate their beauty nor the power of the artist, until we search out the details even in the most obscure corners, and take possession



ALLEGORY OF POVERTY

From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari



ALLEGORY OF OBEDIENCE

From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

of every nook and cranny of the painter's mind as he labored to illustrate the great principles of the Franciscan Order.

The "Marriage with Poverty" is the most important of the series, and controverts completely the idea that the artist always paints out the belief of his soul, for Giotto, as you will recall in his poem, had no sympathy with St. Francis' vows of poverty, yet he was too true an artist and too honest a man to let his prejudice mar the great pivotal thought of his work.

The scene represented in the fresco is the marriage of St. Francis to Lady Poverty. Christ marries them, and they are attended on either side by saints and angels. The three principal figures stand in the center on a raised rock. St. Francis is just placing the ring upon the finger of the bride. On the right the figure of Charity is giving her a heart. At the foot of the rock a little dog barks at Poverty, a boy is throwing a stone, and another pokes a stick at her, all symbolizing the hatred of poverty. On the left a youth is giving his cloak to a beggar, illustrating one of the events in St. Francis' life. On the right are three figures, also enemies to Poverty and Charity, one shaking his fist at the angel, another clutching his money bags tightly. Above all are the figures of two angels floating in the air, carrying offerings in their hands to God, who is represented by two arms outstretched from heaven.

Of the Allegory of "Obedience" Selincourt writes: "Undoubtedly Giotto's chief difficulty here was to connect his subject with its fellows. Poverty and

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

Chastity seemed naturally to adapt themselves to the rocky hill-tops, which the curves of the vaulting roof must have contributed to suggest. Obedience is a virtue which it would appear more natural to associate with the valley. But Giotto could not completely sacrifice his rocky foreground, allowing it, however, to pass almost immediately into a marble platform of the same colour. A further, and perhaps the chief difficulty of the picture was to provide a suitable counterpiece to the tower of Chastity * * * * * His method was extremely bold: St. Francis himself forms the tower, standing upon the roof of the loggia where Obedience sits, immediately above her, dressed like her in black. The angels, that kneel on either side of him, are again in azure, and, with the angel groups below, complete the connecting balance of the design. That the attendant angels should be represented kneeling seems obvious only because it is inevitable. The foremost of them on either side restrains or presents figures typical of those who desire or resent obedience. The latter are imaged in the shape, but without the dignity of a centaur, the lower quarters more closely resembling those of a dog than of a horse. Reckless of the angel who seems intended to hold him back, this lawless intruder is checked only by the vision of Prudence herself.

“But Prudence, who sits at the right of Obedience, is occupied like Humility, who is at her left, in bestowing her gifts upon the aged monk in the center, who receives the yoke from Obedience, and with raised hands prepared to lay it himself upon

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

his shoulders. Prudence, two-featured as at Padua, sits at a desk, her power of mind symbolized by instruments of mathematical science; the mirror in her left hand sheds its light upon the monk who kneels at her side. Humility is content with a lighted taper which she holds in her right hand, and the figure is to be noted for its unusual beauty. The treatment of the central group is still finer in its power and concentration. A rather weighty Virtue, and distinguished by her square halo from the rest, Obedience imposes silence with her finger to her lip. There is a dreamy kindliness in her broad face, as she looks down upon the monk before her, and helps him to raise the yoke above his bending head. She has the geniality of a genuine dweller upon the earth, and the wings, which spring from her shoulders, while they testify to her aspirations, are not yet plumed for flight. But behind her, Christ upon the Cross, and above her, St. Francis lifted by the cord of submission into heaven, reveal the virtues latent in her yoke."

Full descriptions of these allegories might weary us, but they serve to illustrate more than any others, Giotto's wonderfully inventive mind. Admitting that the subjects may have been suggested to him by those who commissioned him to do the work, no one but the artist himself could have thought out the remarkable details. No space in the curiously shaped ceiling was wasted, and even in the uttermost corners something was painted which helped to magnify the importance of the central figure by similitude or contrast.



MARRIAGE OF ST. FRANCIS AND LADY POVERTY

By Sassetta.

Reproduction from a Braun photograph

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

"St. Francis in Glory," the fourth picture, is not as interesting as the others. The saint sits upon a throne covered by a *baldacchino*. He is clothed in somber black; his face devoid of expression seems out of harmony with the great group of angels which sway about the throne in joyful cadence.

Much to the dismay of the many admirers of Giotto, Mr. Berenson has recently expressed himself as having come to the conclusion that these allegories are the work of some other artist, and writes that "it is a pleasure to be able to exonerate Giotto from the blame attaching to the author of the frescoes over the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi." And again, "My more recent studies have convinced me that these were not the work of the great Florentine." Mr. Berenson certainly possesses great courage to take this position, for he stands almost alone in his conviction, yet his arguments are rational and compelling, and he believes that the work exhibited in the allegories is inferior, and not at all commensurate with Giotto's power.

His criticism extends to other representations of the Franciscan legend by Giotto which, he believes, are lacking in tenderness and romance. In this connection he brings to our attention a Sienese artist of the fifteenth century, Sassetta by name, and it is interesting to see from what source he obtained his idea expressed so charmingly in his painting of "Marriage with Poverty."

Unlike the fresco in the Lower Church, Sassetta's picture is founded on narrative. Bonaventura relates that while St. Francis was on his way to

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

Siena one day, "Three poor women, alike in all respects as to height, age and countenance," met him, and greeted him with the words, Welcome, Lady Poverty! then suddenly vanished. Berenson writes, "You may seek in vain through all the golden books of seraphic lore for anything in the nature of an event comparable to this in the opportunities it offers the artist of presenting by means of action inherently symbolical the life's attitude of its founder. The three virgin forms, the salutation, the disappearance—what more real and effective elements could a poetically gifted artist desire?" The painting represents a broad plain, a dark mountain for a background, with high open sky above. The three maidens have met St. Francis and his companion by the way; the saint bends to place a ring upon the finger of one of the maidens; above, at the right of the picture, the maidens float gracefully away in the air, the one upon whose finger St. Francis placed the ring, Lady Poverty, looks back lovingly at him. That is all, yet the picture in its simplicity is beautiful, and very suggestive.

Other frescoes by Giotto in the Lower Church represent miracles said to have been performed by St. Francis. These paintings are very realistic. The groups are composed of plain folk of the town, heavy featured and clumsily dressed, very different from the sweet-faced, graceful angels in the allegories, but possessing possibly more vital interest to the thousands who were to view them as they came from all parts of Italy on their pilgrimages to St. Francis' shrine. * * *

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Fascinating as is the ghostly gloom of the Lower Church, we involuntarily breathe a sigh as we reach the top of the winding stairway, and step into the light that floods the Upper Church. The transition from semi-darkness to noonday glare is, for the moment, almost blinding, and we walk slowly along the transept, with eyes cast down until we reach the nave. We are conscious at first of a most delicious color effect; again the pale blues, pinks, greys and yellows, blending so perfectly, stretching along the walls on either side. Then as we approach nearer, the panels appear, each with its luminous picture, and we find a comfortable point of view from which to begin our study. Giotto painted in this Upper Church of Assisi, a series of frescoes, nineteen in number, of the important events in the life of St. Francis.

- I. St. Francis Honored by a Citizen of Assisi.
- II. St. Francis Gives His Mantle to a Poor Man.
- III. The Vision of St. Francis.
- IV. St. Francis Before the Crucifix at San Damiano.
- V. St. Francis Renounces His Father and the World.
- VI. The Dream of Pope Innocent III.
- VII. Pope Innocent Sanctions the Rules of the Order.
- VIII. The Apparition of the Fiery Chariot.
- IX. The Vision of the Thrones.
- X. The Expulsion of the Devils from Arezzo.

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

- XI. St. Francis Before the Sultan.
- XII. The Glory of St. Francis.
- XIII. Christmas Night at Greccio.
- XIV. The Miracle of the Spring.
- XV. The Sermon to the Birds.
- XVI. The Death of the Knight of Cellano.
- XVII. St. Francis Before Honorius III.
- XVIII. The Apparition at Arles.
- XIX. The Stigmata.

There are nine other frescoes in this series, but the best critics agree that Giotto did not paint them. Doubtless they were the work of some of his pupils. Whether Giotto tired of this tremendous task or was called to more important commissions we cannot tell. It is probable that he designed the whole series of twenty-eight frescoes, the longest story that had ever been painted on cathedral walls. He knew the story well as told by the Franciscans, but his own inventive power and imagination were responsible for the remarkable results.

These pictures have been restored to such an extent that possibly very little remains of the original painting. They have suffered, of course, in the restoration, losing the Giottesque touch which is quite inimitable, but so much of the master's spirit has been preserved that we should be thankful and slow to criticize.

Ruskin has written that unless one understands the relation of Giotto to St. Francis, and of St. Francis to humanity, these pictures will interest one but little.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Giotto may have been the most mercenary and sordid of men, possessing not a spark of love in his heart for St. Francis of Assisi, nor sympathy with his teachings, but certainly he was the greatest interpreter of his life. It is true the Franciscans had written most tenderly of him, preserving with greatest care, many incidents, and the words of his lips, but these were shut up in pages of vellum, exhibited perhaps to the chosen few. Alas! the common people, to whom he really belonged, could not read; they could see, however, and Giotto's pictures were as an open book; they had but to look, and behold! there was the story of their beloved saint.

The paintings made a profound impression on all classes of men; on the cultured and educated, for they revealed the possibilities of an awakening in art; and on the ignorant and superstitious, because even their simple minds could comprehend them, for only a generation had passed away since St. Francis himself had walked among the Umbrian hills and preached in the Assisi cathedral, and many a home had been blessed by his presence.

All these pictures produce a feeling of deep seriousness. The face of St. Francis in almost every fresco is sad, while the faces of the men and women in the attendant groups seem strained with sorrow or frightened wonder. Fortunately the lovely coloring softens the heaviness of countenance, but before we have finished looking at them we long for a smile to break the long lines of melancholy. This somberness was really an inheritance of Byzantine ideals, because the art of that earlier day was joyless.



THE SERMON TO THE BIRDS—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The architectural effects in the pictures are quite remarkable. They are used as backgrounds, and someone has suggested that Giotto took this occasion to experiment, for there are many kinds of towers, minarets and temples, and in the far eastern scenes there are graceful arches and pillars strongly resembling Moorish types.

The pictures are all of such merit that it is difficult to give the pre-eminence to any of them. Giotto places his principle characters well in the foreground, so that our attention is centered upon them, rather than upon the groups and buildings which are merely accessories. He paints these central figures, not always with grace, and seldom with correctness, but he tells his story strongly and surely. The angry father, the suppliant son, the earnest saint, the attentive pope, the fiery sultan, are the important ones, and could never be mistaken. The figure of Christ sweeping through the air in the picture, where St. Francis is caught up in an ecstasy, is full of grace and very beautiful.

In "The Sermon to the Birds," always a favorite fresco, St. Francis is attended by one follower, and as they journey, the birds flock around him under a wayside tree. He looks down upon them tenderly and preaches the little sermon which is so closely associated with his name.

"The Exclusion of the Devils from Arezzo" is possibly the most theatrical and realistic of the series. St. Francis, journeying again with a single follower, comes to Arezzo, which is represented by many towers piled one upon the other. Below, at



THE EXPULSION OF THE DEVILS FROM AREZZO—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the door of the cathedral, the saint raises his hands in fiery denunciation, and the black devils with bats' wings go scrambling over the parapets in direst confusion.

"Christmas Night at Greccio" represents one of the tenderest incidents in St. Francis' life, one which has been told and retold, and which illustrates so well the simplicity and sweetness of his character.

Greccio is a small town perched away up on a mountain-side rising from the Rieti valley. The monastery is high above the town. Let me quote here from one who sought it out: "It was a very steep ascent, the steps were zigzag and paved with small, uneven stones. On the one side was the declivity of the mountain, clothed with a rich vegetation of ferns and laurel. On the other side was a breastwork of chalk stones, commanding an extensive view of the country.

"As I went on ascending, the view became more and more wondrously beautiful. I leaned over the wall; already the garden in which I had been, lay far below, and the two Franciscans at work among the vines were dwarfed by distance. At length the steps came out on a terrace, whence I could see the whole vale of Rieti spread out below like a panorama, partitioned into wide fields, some green, some brown, shut in by the mountain tops. The highest of these were snow-capped, and half shrouded by grey clouds.

"In front of me was the entrance to the monastery, whose white walls really seemed to adhere to the rock and be suspended from it; apparently, the building was on the eve of being detached, and

GIOTTO AT ASSISI

precipitated into the abyss. The gate was of the simplest kind. A door painted red, with a broken iron latch, led into a small anteroom, with a brick floor; a low, narrow window admitted a little light; and one saw another door which opened, or rather stood open, on to a narrow passage constructed of planks, which, at a turning, seemed to lose itself between whitewashed walls * * * * * Close by, a latticed gate led into a chapel, over which were the words: 'In this chapel, dedicated to St. Luke, Francis prepared a resting place for Christ in the crib.'

"There, then, exactly at the entrance of the cloister, was the spot where Christmas night was celebrated in Greccio."

Again the picture tells the story. Quite a company of monks and townspeople have gathered in the little chapel; St. Francis is about to place the bambino in the crib; there are animals close by upon the floor, and the friars are singing lustily, a song of praise. Afterward, St. Francis preached to them, telling the story of the birth of the child, Jesus.

Giotto has not succeeded entirely in this picture, for it is lacking in harmony and in the sympathetic touch. St. Francis and the Child are appealing, but some of the audience are altogether inattentive, and Lord Lindsay makes the assertion that three of the monks in the background are yawning, instead of singing.

The fresco of the Stigmata has been so much restored and is so badly damaged that it is almost grotesque. St. Francis kneels upon the rocks of La Verna, gazing upward at the figure of the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

approaching Christ, the lower portion of whose body is enveloped with heavy layers of wings. Faint lines radiate from this strange body to the hands, feet and side of St. Francis, duplicating in his flesh the marks of the nails and the thrust of the spear upon our Lord's body on the cross.

Many representations of the stigmata have been painted, and the galleries of Europe contain numerous conceptions of the artists of Giotto's time and later periods. Giotto himself painted it again in Santa Groce, and much more successfully from an artistic standpoint, and yet again we find another from his brush in the Louvre, and in the predella are three small pictures, "The Falling Church," "Before the Pope," and "Preaching to the Birds." In the Brera at Milan, Crevelli paints the saint holding the crucifix in his hand from which shine the rays of the Stigmata. Gentile de Fabriano represents him kneeling, with Christ approaching in mid-air with very bright red wings, the rays of the Stigmata descending upon him. There is one by Nicolo da Foligno, showing clots of blood on the saint's hands, feet and side.

In the Uffizzi at Florence, Lorenzo Bicci paints him with crucifix and red book with gold rays coming from the stigmata; Francesco Granacci—the saint kneels before the Virgin and Child with shining rays from hands and feet; Bernardino Liginio—very much like the above picture with red wounds on hands and feet. In Perugia, Lo Spagna gives his conception of the stigmata, and in quaint old Montefalco, which is worth going miles to see, if only to take the



CHRISTMAS NIGHT AT GRECCIO—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

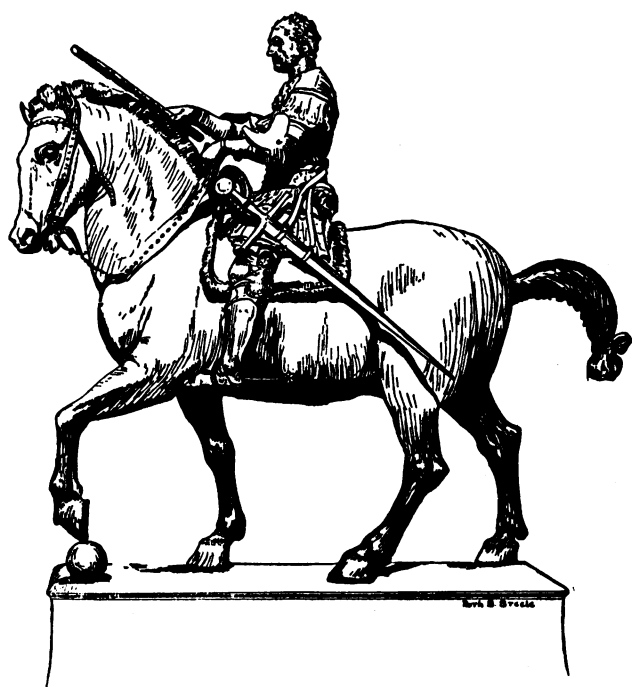
glorious ride from Foligno over the Umbrian hills, Benozzo Gozzoli has painted this strange scene with other frescoes of events in the life of St. Francis.

There are other series of frescoes in this Upper Church, painted by unknown artists of Assisi, representing the history of the Jews from the Creation to the finding of the cup in the sack of Benjamin, and the life of Christ from the Annunciation to the Resurrection. Many of these are so discolored and stained that no pleasure is found in studying them, and it is only in viewing them from a distance that they add anything to the general plan of decoration, but they contributed their share in making San Francesco the greatest temple of art existing at the close of the thirteenth century.

Just now, the truth may be borne in upon us, that many, many words are necessary to convey the impressions that are received by a single glance of the eye. Therefore, the detailed description of paintings often grows wearisome, while the interest in them declines, if the pages are too many and too long.

The writer can only leave suggestions with the reader regarding these remarkable paintings in the Church of San Francesco. There is an atmosphere so intense with feeling, that the pen falters and fails altogether when it attempts to tell the experience. In reality, the thoughtful man becomes completely obsessed with the Franciscan spirit as soon as he enters Assisi, and this influence diminishes not as he lingers in the old church, on the quiet streets, in the Portiuncula or San Damiano, or wanders down the wooded slopes of Mt. Subasio.

GIOTTO AT PADUA



CHAPTER X

GIOTTO AT PADUA

Padua is only twenty miles west of Venice and her history has long been linked with that of the city by the sea.

Barbarous as is the story of the ancient Umbrian towns, the cities of northern Italy have contributed one more bloodthirsty and cruel. The struggle for control in the thirteenth century throughout the Venetian territory was accompanied by scenes of horror too awful to chronicle. Suffice it to say that Padua became a city of prisons and dungeons where thousands met death in its most hideous forms.

With the advent of better days, Padua quickly sprang into life, and although under Venetian rule, asserted an independence of spirit which gave her importance and strength.

The city also became, in a modest way, a center of art and learning. Her great University began its career in 1222, the first students having seceded from the University of Bologna. Later the Venetian Republic insisted that her subjects should be educated in Padua and nowhere else, and the city assuming the name of the "Quartier Latin" of Venice, began to attract artists and men of letters.

Petrarch lived there and Dante made frequent visits; Squarcione, the master of Mantegna, established his studio in the city; Donatello labored there

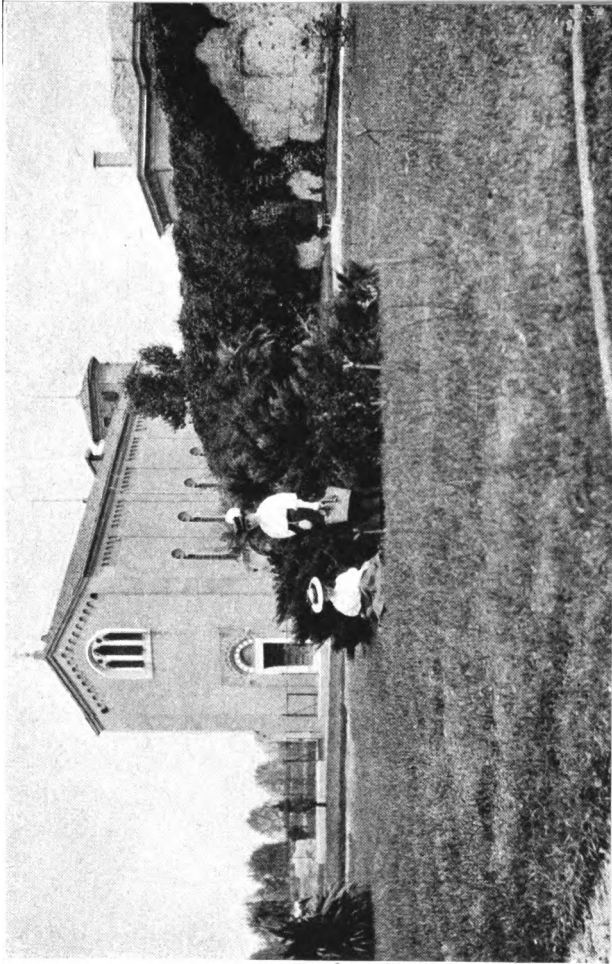
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

for ten years, producing his famous work, the great equestrian statue of General Gattamelata; and Giotto came to decorate the Arena Chapel. Padua's greatest citizen was Livy, the most noted of Roman historians. Her patron saint was Anthony, a Franciscan monk, a dear friend of St. Francis of Assisi. Murillo has made him the subject of some of his finest paintings, and the Paduans erected to his memory a great church crowned with many domes and minarets.

Padua of to-day is old and musty, but still picturesque, with its narrow, crooked streets and low *portici*, or arcades, which are everywhere to be seen.

Towards the close of the thirteenth century, writes Ruskin, Enrico Scrovegno, a noble Paduan, purchased in his native city, the ruins of the Roman Amphitheatre, or Arena. On this site he built for himself, a fortified palace and a chapel dedicated to the Virgin. Enrico's father, Reginaldo, had bequeathed much wealth to his son, but also had left behind him an unsavory reputation as a man of avarice and a miser. Dante consigned him to the Seventh Circle in his *Inferno*. Enrico erected the chapel to atone for his father's evil life. Enrico was later driven into exile and his palace destroyed, but the chapel remains with the ruins of the old wall about it, surrounded by an attractive garden with fine trees and green lawns.

It is a small oblong structure of red brick, quite unpretentious, with no architectural effects. A sacristan stands at the door and admits you on the



ARENA CHAPEL—Padua
From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

payment of a lira, then leaves you to follow your own sweet will.

The interior consists of a nave and choir, and is well lighted by spacious windows. The old choir stalls are decayed and falling to pieces, and the pavement is of modern marble. Behind the altar is the tomb of Enrico with his statue recumbent. The ceiling is arched, containing paintings of Christ with saints, and of the Madonna and Child with saints, painted on a blue background dotted with stars and medallions. On the arch over the entrance to the choir is a painting "Christ in Glory," in the choir are some unimportant frescoes of the school of Giotto, while over the entrance to the building is a large fresco of the Last Judgment, by Giotto.

This, then, is the description of the modest resting place of the most important series of Giotto's paintings. He was at the height of his fame, the acknowledged master of painting in Italy when he was called to Padua, probably in 1305, to decorate the walls of the Arena Chapel.

These very interesting frescoes, about forty in number, illustrating the life of the Virgin and scenes from the life of Jesus, are painted on both the side walls of the chapel in three rows and on either side of the entrance to the choir. The background is light blue and they are in very good condition. A few have been damaged by the elements, notably the "Marriage Procession of the Virgin," one of the most graceful of the series; others are so bright that they appear as if recently restored. It is supposed, however, that they have remained untouched since



INTERIOR OF ARENA CHAPEL—*Showing Giotto Frescoes*
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Giotto left them over six hundred years ago. Again appear the strong characteristics of the painter, the crude drawing, the heavily garmented figures, the bits of architecture, but more landscape than heretofore, for he is now using the rocks and trees. The lovely soft colors glow on the walls as at Assisi.

This list of the frescoes may be useful in following some of the descriptions.

1. The Rejection of Joachim's Offering.
2. Joachim Retires to the Sheepfold.
3. The Angel Appears to Anna.
4. The Sacrifice of Joachim.
5. The Vision of Joachim.
6. The Meeting at the Golden Gate.
7. The Birth of the Virgin.
8. The Presentation of the Virgin.
9. The Rods are Brought to the High Priest.
10. The Watching of the Rods.
11. The Betrothal of the Virgin.
12. The Virgin Returns to Her House.
13. The Angel Gabriel.
14. The Annunciation.
15. The Salutation.
16. The Angel Appearing to the Shepherd.
17. The Wise Men's Offering.
18. The Presentation in the Temple.
19. The Flight into Egypt.
20. The Massacre of the Innocents.
21. The Young Christ in the Temple.
22. The Baptism of Christ.
23. The Marriage in Cana.

GIOTTO AT PADUA

24. The Raising of Lazarus.
25. The Entry into Jerusalem.
26. The Expulsion from the Temple.
27. The Hiring of Judas.
28. The Last Supper.
29. The Washing of the Feet.
30. The Kiss of Judas.
31. Christ Before Caiaphas.
32. The Scourging of Christ.
33. Christ Bearing His Cross.
34. The Crucifixion.
35. The Entombment.
36. The Resurrection.
37. The Ascension.
38. The Descent of the Holy Spirit.

It will be observed that the first dozen paintings are scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, to whom the chapel was dedicated, and unless one is familiar with this subject, the frescoes in spite of their beauty will be almost meaningless. At the risk then of repeating to many who are familiar with the legend, let us devote a few pages to the Madonna.

The Protestant church has given but little recognition to the Virgin Mary. The records concerning her in the New Testament are very meager and the impression is conveyed that she was a woman of sweet and gentle disposition, with a spirit overburdened and saddened by the great mystery which had come into her life. To the average Protestant she has been an object of sympathy, rather than of reverence. It is quite rational to believe that she

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

experienced all the joys of motherhood during the early years of the Child Jesus, but when at twelve he spoke those mysterious words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business," there must have sprung up between them a barrier which even her love could not cross, and the bitter knowledge must have been revealed to her that henceforth her child was to be the world's child. Our heart's impulses bid us turn from this and later incidents back to the days of babyhood, when her child was all her own and she could lavish upon it the love of her tender nature.

These few vague impressions are all we may have entertained regarding the Madonna until we began to study religious history in its relation to art. It is a significant fact that for one thousand years the whole Christian and civilized world worshipped the Madonna and that to-day, millions of men and women lift their prayers to her, the "Queen of Heaven." It is true that an element of superstition and idolatry entered into this adoration, but no fair-minded Protestant should wholly condemn as heretical or false, a worship which has brought peace and happiness to so many of his fellow creatures.

In the field of art, the Madonna reigned supreme through many generations, and later shared in equal honor with the Divine Child. These representations by the world's great artists have been and always will be art's consummation.

Mrs. Jameson, in her "Legends of the Madonna," has given us an exhaustive study of the Virgin

GIOTTO AT PADUA

Mary, and I shall quote freely and at length from her "Introduction."

"The first historical mention of direct worship paid to the Virgin Mary, occurs in a passage in the works of St. Epiphanius, who died in 403. The very first instance which occurs in written history of an invocation to Mary, is in the life of St. Justina. This passage, however, does not prove that previously to the fourth century there had been no worship or invocation of the Virgin. However this may be, it is to the same period—the fourth century—we refer the most ancient representations of the Virgin in art.

The earliest figures extant are those on the Christian sarcophagi, but neither in the early sculpture nor in the mosaics do we find any figure of the Virgin standing alone: she forms a part of a group of the Nativity, or the Adoration of the Magi. St. Augustine says that there existed in his time no authentic portrait of the Virgin, but it is inferred that such pictures did then exist, since there were already disputes concerning their authenticity. It was just after the Council of Ephesus that history first makes mention of a supposed authentic portrait of the Virgin Mary. The Empress Eudocia, traveling in the Holy Land, sent home such a picture of the Virgin holding the Child, and it was placed in a church at Constantinople. It was at that time regarded as of very great antiquity, and supposed to have been painted from life. No mention is made of St. Luke in the earliest account of this picture, though like all the antique effigies of uncertain origin, it was in after times attributed to him.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The history of the next three hundred years testifies to the triumph of orthodoxy, the extension and popularity of the worship of the Virgin and the consequent multiplication of her image in every form and material through the whole of Christendom.

Then followed the schism of the Iconoclasts, which distracted the church for over one hundred years under Leo III, the Isaurian, and his immediate successors. Such were the extravagances of superstition to which the image-worship had led the excitable Orientals, that if Leo had been a wise and temperate reformer, he might have done much good in checking its excesses; but he was himself an ignorant, merciless barbarian. The persecution by which he sought to exterminate the sacred pictures of the Madonna, and the cruelties exercised on her unhappy votaries, produced a general destruction of the most curious and precious remains of antique art. The temperate and eloquent apology for sacred pictures addressed by Gregory II to Emperor Leo, had the effect of mitigating the persecution in Italy, hence it is in Italy only that any important remains of sacred art anterior to the Iconoclast dynasty have been preserved.

The second council of Nice, under the Empress Irene in 787, condemned the Iconoclasts and restored the use of the sacred pictures in the churches. We must observe, however, that only pictures were allowed; all sculptured imagery was still prohibited and has never since been allowed in the Greek church except in very low relief.

GIOTTO AT PADUA

In the succeeding period, from Charlemagne to the first crusade, the popular devotion to the Virgin, and the multiplication of sacred pictures continued steadily to increase; yet in the tenth and eleventh centuries, art was at its lowest ebb.

The pilgrimages to the Holy Land and the crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, had a most striking effect on religious art. More particularly did this returning wave of Oriental influences modify the representation of the Virgin. Fragments of the apocryphal gospels and legends of Palestine and Egypt were introduced, worked up into ballads, stories, and dramas, and gradually incorporated with the teaching of the Church.

The title of "Our Lady" (French, *Notre Dame*, Italian, *La Madonna*, German, *Unser Liebe Frau*), came first into general use in the days of chivalry, for she was the lady "of all hearts," whose colors all were proud to wear. Never had her votaries so abounded. Hundreds upon hundreds had enrolled themselves in brotherhoods, vowed to her especial service, or devoted to acts of charity to be performed in her name. Already the great religious communities, which at this time comprehended all the enthusiasm, learning and influence of the Church, had placed themselves under her protection. The Cistercians wore white in honor of her purity; the Servi wore black in respect to her sorrows; the Franciscans had enrolled themselves as champions of the Immaculate Conception; and the Dominicans introduced the rosary. All these richly endowed communities vied with each other in multiplying

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

churches, chapels, and pictures, in honor of their patroness, and expressive of her several attributes.

But of all the influences on Italian art in that wonderful fourteenth century, Dante was the greatest. He was the intimate friend of Giotto. Through the communion of mind, not less than through his writings, he infused into religious art that mingled theology, poetry, and mysticism, which ruled in the Giottesque school during the following century, and went hand in hand with the development of the power and practice of imitation. The theology of Dante was the theology of his age. His ideas respecting the Virgin Mary were precisely those to which the writings of St. Bernard, St. Bonaventura, and St. Thomas Aquinas had already lent all the persuasive power of eloquence, and the church all the weight of her authority. Dante rendered these doctrines into poetry, and Giotto and his followers rendered them into form; and thanks to the divine poet!—that early conception of some of the most beautiful of the Madonna subjects—has never, as a religious and poetical conception, been surpassed by later artists, in spite of all the appliances of color, mastery of light and shade, and marvelous efficiency of hand since attained.”

This concludes the quotation, but the subject might be followed with much interest into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the great artists of the Renaissance painted their beautiful pictures of the “Madonna and Child,” and the “Holy Family.”

GIOTTO AT PADUA

The story of the birth and early life of the Virgin Mary has its origin in the Greek apocryphal gospels. It found credence and was taught in the early church, and the events in her life as therein chronicled became the subjects of Christian art. The scriptures first mention her at the time of the Annunciation, and we are informed that she lived at Nazareth, and was "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph." The legend regarding her birth is very quaint and beautiful.

"There was a man of Nazareth, whose name was Joachim, and he had for his wife a woman of Bethlehem, whose name was Anna, and both were of the royal race of David. Their lives were pure and righteous, and they served the Lord with singleness of heart. And being rich, they divided their substance into three portions, one for the service of the temple, one for the poor and the strangers, and the third for the household. On a certain feast day, Joachim brought double offerings to the Lord according to his custom, for he said, 'Out of my superfluity will I give for the whole people, that I may find favour in the sight of the Lord, and forgiveness for my sins.' And when the children of Israel brought their gifts, Joachim also brought his; but the high priest Issachar stood over against him and opposed him, saying, 'It is not lawful for thee to bring thine offerings, seeing that thou hast not begot issue in Israel.' And Joachim was exceedingly sorrowful, and went down to his house; and he searched through all the registers of the twelve tribes to discover if he alone had been childless in Israel. And he found

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

that all righteous men, and the patriarchs who had lived before him, had been the fathers of sons and daughters. And he called to mind his father Abraham, to whom in his old age had been granted a son, even Isaac. And Joachim was more and more sorrowful, and he would not be seen by his wife, but avoided her, and went away into the pastures where were the shepherds and the sheep-cotes. And he built himself a hut, and fasted forty days and forty nights; for he said, 'Until the Lord God look upon me mercifully, prayer shall be my meat and my drink.'

"But his wife Anna remained lonely in her house, and mourned with a twofold sorrow, for her widowhood, and her barrenness. Then drew near the last day of the feast of the Lord; and Judith her handmaid said to Anna, 'How wilt thou thus afflict thy soul? Behold the feast of the Lord is come, and it is not lawful for thee thus to mourn. Take this silken fillet, which was bestowed upon me by one of high degree whom I formerly served, and bind it round thy head, for it is not fit that I who am thy handmaid should wear it, but it is fitting for thee, whose brow is the brow of a crowned queen.' And Anna replied, 'Begone! such things are not for me, for the Lord hath humbled me. As for this fillet, some wicked person hath given it to thee and art thou come to make me a partaker in thy sin?' And Judith her maid answered, 'What evil shall I wish thee since thou wilt not hearken to my voice? For worse I cannot wish thee than that with which the Lord hath afflicted thee, seeing that he hath shut up

GIOTTO AT PADUA

thy womb, that thou shouldst not be a mother in Israel.' And Anna hearing these words was sorely troubled. And she laid aside her mourning garments, and she adorned her head, and put on her bridal attire; and at the ninth hour she went forth into her garden, and sat down under a laurel tree and prayed earnestly. And looking up to heaven, she saw within the laurel bush a sparrow's nest; and mourning within herself she said, 'Alas! and woe is me! who hath begotten me? who hath brought me forth? That I should be accursed in the sight of Israel, and scorned and shamed before my people, and cast out of the temple of the Lord! Woe is me! to what shall I be likened? I cannot be likened to the fowls of heaven, for the fowls of heaven are fruitful in thy sight, O Lord! Woe is me! to what shall I be likened? Not to these waters, for they are fruitful in thy sight, O Lord! Woe is me! to what shall I be likened? Not unto the earth, for the earth bringeth forth her fruit in due season, and praiseth thee, O Lord!' And behold an angel of the Lord stood by her and said, 'Anna, thy prayer is heard, thou shalt bring forth, and thy child shall be blessed throughout the whole world.' And Anna said, 'As the Lord liveth, whatever I shall bring forth, be it a man-child or a maid, I will present it an offering to the Lord.' And behold another angel came and said to her, 'See, thy husband Joachim is coming with his shepherds;' for an angel had spoken to him also, and had comforted him with promises. And Anna went forth to meet her husband, and Joachim came from the pasture with his herds, and

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

they met at the golden gate; and Anna ran and embraced her husband, and hung upon his neck, saying, 'Now know I that the Lord hath blessed me. I who was a widow am no longer a widow. I who was barren shall become a joyful mother.' And they returned home together. And when her time was come, Anna brought forth a daughter; and she said, 'This day my soul magnifieth the Lord.' And she laid herself down in her bed; and she called the name of her child Mary, which in the Hebrew is Miriam.

"When the child was three years old, Joachim said, 'Let us invite the daughters of Israel, and they shall take each a taper or a lamp, and attend on her, that the child may not turn back from the temple of the Lord.' And being come to the temple, they placed her on the first step, and she ascended alone all the steps to the altar; and the high priest received her there, kissed her, and blessed her, saying, 'Mary, the Lord hath magnified thy name to all generations, and in thee shall be made known the redemption of the children of Israel.' And being placed before the altar, she danced with her feet, so that all the house of Israel rejoiced with her and loved her. Then her parents returned home, blessing God because the maiden had not turned back from the temple."

Mary remained in the temple until she was fourteen years old, when she was married to Joseph, which event brings us down to the beginning of the Biblical narrative.

The events in the Virgin's life have been the favorite subject of many artists. Giotto and

GIOTTO AT PADUA

Taddeo Gaddi, and two hundred years later, Ghirlandajo and Durer, represented all the story in serial frescoes or wood cuts, but the Paduan frescoes of Giotto surpass all in beauty and thoughtful expression.

Ruskin's Monograph on the Arena Chapel paintings is an authority of high value. The criticism was prepared for the Arundel Society from a series of wood cuts owned by the organization, and not from the frescoes themselves. One wishes that Ruskin might have added to his criticism his impressions of the coloring of the pictures. In his descriptions he quotes from the Apocryphal gospels, the Protevangelion, the "Gospel of St. Mary," and also from the Harleian manuscript which he found in the British Museum, but a careful study of the pictures brings to light the fact that Giotto did not always literally follow these sources of information. We are led rather to believe that there may have been other sources extant in his day, which have since disappeared, or that his very fertile imagination may have frequently supplied some interesting detail.

In passing through an art gallery we usually content ourselves with viewing pictures as a whole; we cannot spare the time to examine all the details of light and shade, grouping and composition. Yet the study of detail is most enjoyable, for it not only adds immensely to the value of the picture, but it brings us into closer sympathy with the mind and thought of the artist. Giotto was a painter of detail, and his paintings require a careful scrutiny, lest we lose a portion of the artist's conception. Let us then

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

bear this in mind as we rapidly review these rare frescoes of the Life of the Virgin, as Giotto painted them on the walls of the Arena Chapel.

I.

The Rejection of Joachim's Offering.

This event takes place in the Temple, which is suggested by the altar, the pulpit, and the enclosure where the priest receives the offering. Joachim stands with the lamb (his offering), in his arms, and the priest having refused to accept it, seems to be angrily ejecting him from his presence. By way of contrast, another priest in the enclosure is blessing a young man whose offering has been accepted.

II.

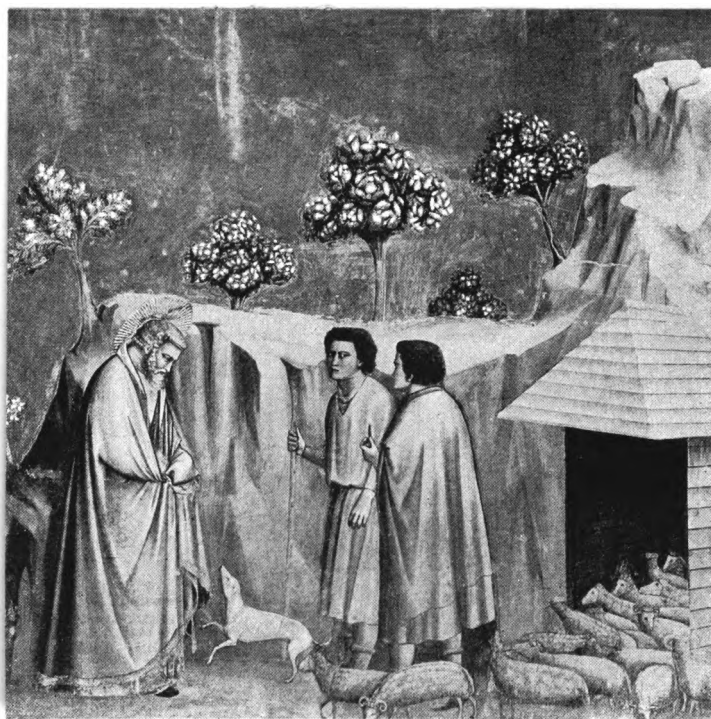
Joachim Retires to the Sheepfold.

The figure of Joachim has been much admired: it is thoughtful, serious and majestic. His sorrow is shown in his dejection, and he seems to be oblivious of the presence of the shepherds, or of the dog which runs to greet him. The shepherds are rather dismayed at his sudden appearance. The sheep are badly drawn, while the rocks, trees and hut are again merely suggestive of the place out among the hills where Joachim went to be alone with his unhappiness.

III.

The Annunciation to Anna.

In his representation of this scene, Giotto has departed from the Virgin story which relates that the angel appeared to Anna in the garden, and shows



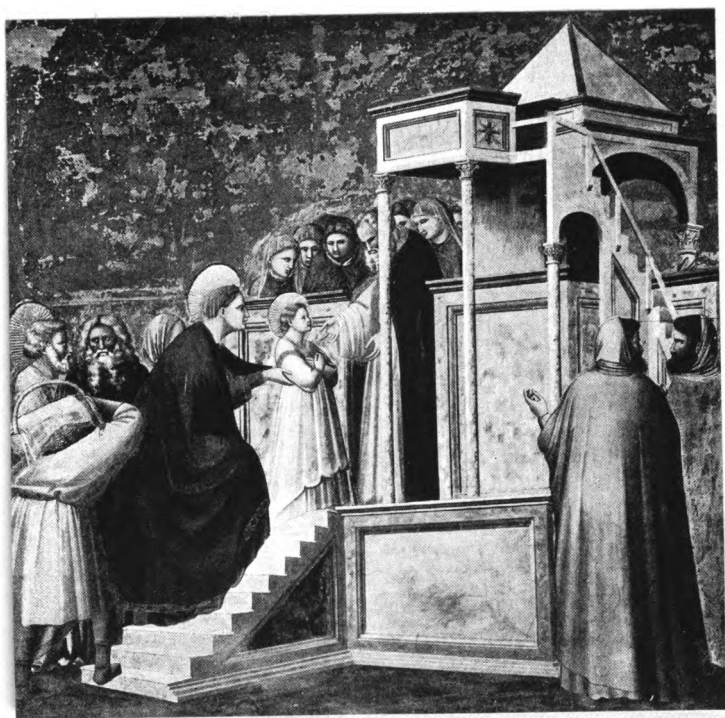
JOACHIM RETIRES TO THE SHEEPFOLD—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

us the interior of one of the rooms in the house. Anna is kneeling upon the floor, the angel is entering through a window. A maid is spinning in an adjoining room, and the picture would be more effective if she had been omitted. Its real beauty is not revealed unless this portion is covered, for try as one may to forget her presence, she remains an intruder.

The artist has succeeded admirably in this painting in creating an atmosphere which is very tender and so natural, that we might almost believe, as Ruskin says, "That angels might appear anywhere, and any day and to all men, as a matter of course, if we would ask them, or were fit company for them." Although many of the frescoes in this remarkable chapel are very much defaced, yet there still remains a wealth of color of which we know nothing as we look upon the photographic reproductions. It, therefore, may be interesting to read a few lines from Selincourt's description of the "Annunciation" in order that our conception of it may be more complete.

"The coloring in this fresco is well preserved and deserves special attention. The house is a delicate green outside, roofed with pale red tiles. Inside, the walls are deep green, to which a striped bed-cover and a red ottoman give pleasing relief. White bed-curtains, attached to rods which hang from the wainscoted ceiling, shine with a subdued luster behind the kneeling saint, whose dress is of golden brown. A few small objects on the walls, a pair of bellows, and a vase upon a corner bracket, catch the light, and emphasize the simplicity and neatness of the room."



PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

IV.

The Sacrifice of Joachim.

In the Harleian manuscript it is related that after Joachim had spent many days in fasting and prayer, an angel appeared to him, commanding him to make an offering unto the Lord.

Giotto put no restraint upon his imagination in this fresco, and the conception is strange in many of its details. The three figures, the angel, Joachim, and the shepherd, are well drawn. The angel is telling Joachim that his wife was sorrowing at home, but that she has been visited and consoled. He bids him return to her, tells him that his sacrifice has been accepted, and that a child shall be born to them. Joachim looks at the angel intently, the shepherd lifts his eyes and hands in devotion, although the angel is invisible to him. The hand of God appears out of the sky, signifying that Joachim has found favor, and his sacrifice, the acceptance denied him by the priest in the temple. On the altar is the skeleton of the lamb which was the burnt offering, and by careful observation one can discover in the ascending flames and smoke, the figure of a little child. Joachim was deeply moved by these events, for "he fell upon the earth in great fear, and lay from the sixth hour until the evening."

V.

The Angel Appears to Joachim.

This picture seems to be a continuation of the one preceding it, for while Joachim lay in a trance, he had a vision of an angel coming from heaven, who

GIOTTO AT PADUA

confirmed what had been told him at the scene of the sacrifice.

Giotto has shown his wonderful power in the extraordinary figure of the angel, who is sweeping through space with body perfectly poised. Very few artists have been able to attach wings to the human body without giving offense to the artistic eye, but here we see a form symmetrical and graceful, with wings of propelling force, full of motion, imparting to the whole scene an atmosphere of life and reality.

VI.

The Meeting at the Golden Gate.

When one reflects a little upon the events which have occurred during the days of separation of Joachim and Anna, the hours of bitter sorrow and the remarkable experiences which have come to both of them, one will readily recognize the pathos of this beautiful picture. Their faces are still sad and serious, and their joy is only expressed by their very tender embrace. Joachim's shepherd attendant and Anna's maids are happy onlookers, all save one, who may have been the maid who had so recently offended her mistress. She is half hiding her gloomy face, refusing to look at the happy reunion.

VII.

The Birth of the Virgin.

The event is represented in the same room where Anna received the "Annunciation" from the angel.

It is not difficult to discern that the coming of the little child has caused some commotion in the

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

family, for the mother seems almost overburdened with superfluity of service. One is inclined to think, while looking at this picture and the one preceding it, that so small a family would not require so many maids, and that possibly some of the attendants might be friends and neighbors. However, they all seem to be busy, and the newcomer is not likely to suffer for lack of care.

Giotto has introduced in this picture the strange custom practised by early artists of representing two scenes simultaneously. The baby in one scene is being placed in its mother's arms by a maid, and in the other scene has just been washed and dressed and is having her nose carefully wiped by another maid.

Giotto could not draw attractive babies, and the little one here looks quite uncomfortable in its swaddling clothes, and very much over developed for the short period of her existence. The scene as a whole is very natural in its simplicity.

VIII.

The Presentation of the Virgin.

This fresco is one of the most important of the series and is worthy of study. The outlines of the temple are like those in the first fresco, and again are merely symbolical. A number of persons are represented, the Virgin, Anna and Joachim, a servant with a basket upon his back ("a heavier weight than its bulk would naturally justify, so perhaps intended for the Virgin's baggage," writes Selincourt), the priests and several maidens, votaries of the temple.



WATCHING OF THE RODS—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The story relates that the presentation took place when the Virgin was three years old, and it was considered almost a miracle that she could ascend the long flight of steps alone. The early artists had strange conceptions of childhood, for they always painted children with large physiques. In this picture Mary appears very mature. Her attitude as she advances to meet the priest is devotional and sweet, and her mother who is tenderly supporting her, seems loath to give up her child so soon, although in doing so she bravely fulfills her vow. Giotto has departed from the legend in many particulars, preferring to portray his own ideas.

It is interesting to compare this fresco with the same representation which is painted on the walls of Santa Croce in Florence, by Taddeo Gaddi, a contemporary of Giotto. Taddeo Gaddi's production is more spectacular and is lacking in simplicity and reverence. Our attention is distracted from the event by the elaborate accessories. He, however, follows the Virgin story closely. Mary is ascending the traditional fifteen steps alone; she has paused at the first landing, and with hand outstretched, is pointing to her father and mother.

IX and X.

The Rods Brought to the High Priest.

Watching the Rods.

These two paintings represent that strange and interesting portion of the legend of the Virgin Mary which refers to her marriage. When she was

[314]

GIOTTO AT PADUA

fourteen years old, all those who desired to be suitors for her hand were invited to assemble at the temple, each bringing a rod with him, which was given to the high priest and placed upon the altar. Then the suitors, kneeling about the altar watched the rods all night, for he whose rod should bud would be accepted.

The pictures are valuable as illustrations, and the expressions on the faces of the priest and of many of the suitors show an anxiety befitting so important an occasion. Joseph alone, who appears much older than the others, seems indifferent and hesitating.

XI.

The Betrothal of the Virgin.

The "Sposalizio," or "Marriage of the Virgin," has been a favorite subject for many artists. One may see Taddeo Gaddi's at Santa Croce, Fra Angelico's in the Uffizi, Perugino's at Caen, Raphael's at Milan, and come back to Giotto's at Padua with complete satisfaction. The composition of the principal group is much the same in all the pictures. Joseph holds the budding rod, surmounted by a white lily and a dove, and is placing a ring upon Mary's finger; a rejected suitor is breaking his rod over his knee, while another raises his hand to strike Joseph.

Giotto has made the ceremony dignified and impressive, which is more than can be said of some of those who came after him, although they copied many of the details of his conception.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

XII.

The Virgin Mary Returns to Her House.

This fresco is a most exquisite production, one of the loveliest of Giotto's works, and worthy to be placed among the world's great paintings. Ruskin says that it ought to be compared with any classical composition, with a portion, for instance, of the Elgin frieze, or with any composition subsequent to the time of Raphael, in order to feel its noble freedom from pictorial artifice and attitude. But alas! The ravages of time are making sad work of it, and year by year the figures and colors grow fainter and fainter.

The picture needs no explanation for it tells its story so adequately. The sweet seriousness and calm dignity of the participants, the graceful folds of drapery, the suggestion of slow and dignified motion keeping step to the music of the viol and trumpets, combine to satisfy completely, not only the intellect but also the artistic imagination.

XIII and XIV.

The Annunciation

Giotto has represented the "Annunciation" in two frescoes, one on either side of the arch which separates the nave from the choir. The figures are large and stately, both are kneeling, the angel's hand is uplifted, his lips apart as though speaking the words, "Blessed art thou among women." Mary's arms are crossed upon her breast, she holds a book in one hand, her eyes are cast down, her whole attitude is one of seriousness and humility.



THE VIRGIN MARY RETURNS TO HER HOME—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Many great artists have painted the "Annunciation," and possibly no painting so well illustrates the saying that there are "many men of many minds." Simplicity of illustration and spiritual atmosphere are of first importance in paintings of this character, and when these are lacking, they are merely types, or possibly interesting but unconvincing studies. Such conceptions as Giotto's, Fra Angelico's at San Marco, or Filippo Lippi's in the National Gallery are the most satisfying; while Crevelli's in the National Gallery, or Veronese's in the Uffizi, and again at Venice in the Academy, offend, particularly the latter, where the Virgin has the attitude of an actress, and the angel is, to repeat a criticism, "too gay."

The next fresco is the "Salutation" which is followed by the "Nativity" and a long series of events in the life of Christ. Greater familiarity with many of these paintings by the hands of other artists suggests brevity in further discussion of Giotto's conception of them. The study, however, should not be concluded without devoting a few pages to Giotto's representations of the figure of Christ.

No other artist has so completely satisfied me in portrayals of the Christ as Giotto, although the remarkable painting in Siena by Sodoma, the "Scourging of Christ," made an impression upon me never to be forgotten. In this series in the Arena Chapel, Giotto has painted the divine figure many times, and nearly every time with strength and beauty.



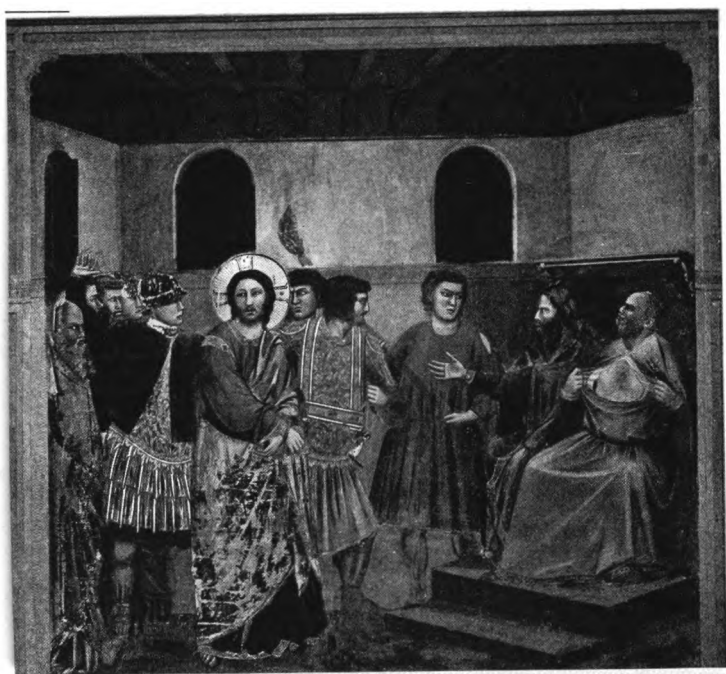
THE RAISING OF LAZARUS—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

In the "Resurrection of Lazarus," He is standing, a majestic figure with hand upraised, His eyes fixed intently upon the dead man whom he has summoned from the tomb. The contrast between the two figures, life and death, is most powerful, and one does not doubt that, as the grave clothes are unbound, Lazarus will breathe and speak again, for the conqueror of death has spoken the words, "Lazarus come forth."

Again in the "Kiss of Judas," Christ is represented in the garden, surrounded by the soldiers who have come to arrest him. Judas is about to press the kiss upon his cheek, and we can almost hear the words, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" We marvel that Judas can withstand the look of infinite pity with which Christ regards him, seeming to search his very soul. See another contrast here, one figure full of greed, hastening to do its evil work, the other, oblivious to all danger, in the midst of enemies seeking his life, yet conscious only of one fact, the sad fulfillment of his words, "One of you shall betray me!"

Once more, in the scene, "Christ before Caiaphas," Giotto has portrayed the Saviour standing bound before the high priest. Caiaphas has just asked him the question, "Art Thou the Christ?" and has received his answer. Filled with anger at what he considers blasphemy, he rends his garments, and the soldier raises his hand to strike the helpless prisoner. Jesus calmly turns to see who will strike him. The face is inexpressibly sad and beautiful, and if Giotto had painted nothing else, I would be



CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

his devoted admirer just for this alone. As we look upon the face we are reminded that "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

In 1886, Timothy Cole wrote from Padua: "I am here in the Arena Chapel, and am at last confronted by Giotto. How brilliant, light, and rich the coloring is! It quite fulfills all that I had read or thought of Giotto. I am conveniently located and the light is good, but it is hard to keep to work with so many fine things above one's head. I can scarcely escape the feeling that the heavens are open above me, and yet I must keep my head bent downward to earth. Surely no one ever had a more inspiring workshop."

Mr. Cole found something worthy of his most beautiful work in the fresco of "Christ before Caiaphas," for he reproduced the head of Christ in one of his exquisite line engravings in the Century Magazine in 1892. I quote his impression of the painting: "What could be finer than the action of Christ, full of gentleness, as with calm and unshaken dignity he turns to look upon his smiter? The attention centers in this supremely fine face, one of Giotto's masterpieces of subtile expression. He shows the perfect mastery of Christ over his emotions at a moment of surprise. There is a benign sweetness in the countenance. But to appreciate this fully, one must see the original, in which not only is there the added charm of color, but the contrast of the surrounding faces, brutal with hate and anger, serves to throw into greater relief the peculiar strength and sweetness of the face of Christ. The glory around



THE KISS OF JUDAS—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

the head is gilded, the hair is of a soft brown color, the beard of the same color but a little lighter, the over-robe of a light fresh blue, and the under-robe of a soft dull red."

Let us look at one more picture in this series which would surely attract our attention—the "Last Supper." This was a favorite subject of the Byzantine artists, and one or two copies, which were taken from the walls of the old catacombs, are preserved in the Vatican. Leonardo da Vinci's name will always be associated with the most beautiful production of this great subject, and although Giotto's effort was an advance upon the artists who preceded him, his picture cannot for a moment be compared with Leonardo's. The painting is not impressive, and is lacking in the action which Giotto usually portrays so well. Jesus is at one end of the table; Judas, sitting opposite him, dips his hand with him into the dish. It is just at the moment when Christ is saying, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." The announcement which, in Leonardo's painting, stirred the disciples to such energetic outbursts of "Is it I?" seems to have created no interest or surprise among the disciples in Giotto's picture, for with the exception of one or two, their faces are unmoved, and John slumbers on peacefully upon the Saviour's breast.

The arrangement at the table is crowded, there are eight on one side, five on the other—the fatal number, thirteen. Four of the disciples sit with faces turned from our view, and Giotto finds himself



THE LAST SUPPER—Giotto

From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

in a serious predicament. He dares not omit the traditional halo; these holy men must be adorned as usual, so he consigns each one of them to the ungrateful task of gazing *into* his halo so long as the painting shall endure. Thus the effect of this picture is destroyed by the ludicrous situation and we turn away with a smile upon our lips, and in imagination we also see a twinkle in the eye of the humorous Giotto.

It is quite impossible to make a satisfactory study of the "Last Judgment," which is painted on the wall over the chapel entrance. The coloring is so very dark, and the figures are so very faint that one cannot distinguish the "blessed" from the "damned," but photographs disclose that it contains all the traditional glories and horrors which were included in the church creeds of the period. The fresco does bring to mind that Dante was living in Padua while Giotto was decorating the chapel, and it is reasonable to suppose that the two men spent much time together. Did Dante come to the chapel each day to watch the paintings appear under Giotto's facile brush? As the painter rested may not the poet have read to him fragments of his verses which stirred his soul? Is it not possible then, in this great fresco of "The Last Judgment" that the poet's thought was interpreted by the artist's brush? Surely Dante's influence upon Giotto at this time must have been very strong, for the painting "is conceived quite in a Dantesque spirit."

Admirers of Giotto have found much satisfaction in the study of the series of Virtues and Vices which

GIOTTO AT PADUA

also appear along the side walls of the Arena Chapel. Selincourt points out that the Virtues are painted on the side of Paradise and the Vices on the side of Hell, thus establishing their relationship to the fresco of the "Last Judgment." They are a sturdy lot of figures, and Giotto has represented them with ingenuity and intelligence and painted them all in dead color. Their titles are—"Prudence and Folly"—"Fortitude and Inconstancy"—"Temperance and Wrath"—"Justice and Injustice"—"Faith and Infidelity"—"Charity and Envy"—"Hope and Despair."

Mr. Perkins concludes his general criticism of them with these words: "Not only did he here produce a work possessed of far more than ordinary artistic merit, but he succeeded also in formulating a series of allegorical representations which, on account of their powerful significance of imagery, were handed down by his successors to take their place in the art of the succeeding centuries as generally accepted types, incapable of improvement, of those abstract qualities which they were intended to symbolize."

GIOTTO AT ROME AND FLORENCE



RUTH B. STEAD.

CHAPTER XI

GIOTTO AT ROME

Interest and sentiment are not lacking as we come to view the work of Giotto which still exists in Rome. We find the artist there in 1298, invited by Cardinal Stefaneschi of St. Peters. We also have the silent testimony of an existing document containing these words: "Stefaneschi the cardinal is dead * * * who conferred many benefits upon our church; for he ordered the painting of the Tribune, and spent 500 florins of gold upon the work. For the most holy altar of the church he presented a picture painted by the hand of Giotto, which cost 800 florins of gold. In the cloister of the same church he ordered a work in mosaic to be made by the hand of the same most notable painter, the story how Christ with his right hand supported the blessed Apostle Peter as he walked on the waves, and saved him from sinking; and for this work he paid 2,200 florins; and many were his benefits besides, which it would be tedious to recount." The "work in mosaic" mentioned in the above extract is the famous Navicella or Ship of the Church which is still to be seen in the vestibule of St. Peters above the main entrance. The picture has been severely damaged by exposure, many removals and re-settings, and restored by various artists until little remains save the general design. This is probably the only work

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

in mosaic ever attempted by Giotto, and it is quite amazing that he should have been chosen to do it, for there was a school of mosaicists in Rome at the time, and if the records are correct Giotto was but twenty-two years old. Evidently his reputation was far-reaching or he would not have been called to Rome on such an important commission. That the workmanship on the Navicella was successful has been abundantly proven by the extraordinary care lavished upon it during the centuries to insure its preservation.

Giotto's other great work in Rome is the panel painting or altar-piece executed for the high altar of St. Peters. Remembering the vicissitudes of this wonderful church it is fortunate for posterity that the painting has been preserved.

It has been cut in sections, of which some are missing, and the portions that remain are in the sacristy. It must have been very beautiful after its completion, for even yet there are evidences of the artist's skill and power. The principal paintings are Christ Enthroned as the central subject, Madonna and Child, Crucifixion of St. Peter, and Martyrdom of St. Paul. There are figures of the apostles grand and stately, which remind us of Sargent's prophets in the Public Library at Boston. The figure of Christ is majestic in its bearing, although the solemn face is Byzantine in its conception. The throne is well proportioned, the perspective of the panels with the angels is better than some of Giotto's later efforts of this character. The artist has introduced in this picture for the first time, the

GIOTTO AT ROME

figure of the donor (Cardinal Stefaneschi). He is kneeling devoutly at the foot of the throne. This novelty was employed by artists who came after Giotto, and frequently marred the scene through lack of reverence. In this painting, however, there is no question touching the humility of the prostrate cardinal, and Giotto has again created in the midst of these celestial surroundings, a tender "human situation."

GIOTTO AT FLORENCE

After the death of St. Francis of Assisi in 1226, his followers, undismayed by schisms within their ranks, continued to carry on his work throughout the civilized world. The rules of the order had been greatly modified, and harmony prevailed between the Franciscans and the powers at Rome. In fact, the pope acknowledged unreservedly, the strength of the order and its usefulness to the Catholic church.

In Italy, the Franciscans established themselves in many cities, usually in neighborhoods of the poor where they could minister to their needs. They built a small chapel and monastery just outside the walls of Florence, and encouraged, doubtless, by their success, began within the city in the year 1294, the construction of the Church of Santa Croce, which later was to become one of their most important temples of worship. Their rivals, the Dominicans, were busily engaged at the same time upon

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

their wonderful structure, Santa Maria Novella, and these two churches are to-day the most interesting in Florence, although not comparable in beauty with the Cathedral group.

Santa Croce has no architectural merit. It is a great mass of brick walls built with the hope that it might some day be encrusted with marble, but the day never came, not even to the façade, until fifty years ago, when through the munificence of an Englishman, that portion, which must be seen by all who approach the church by way of the Piazza Santa Croce, was made a little more artistic and pleasant to look upon.

The interior of the church is as cold and barren as the exterior and devoid of beauty. The nave is of vast proportions, there are no side chapels, and the transepts are short, but built out from them are ten chapels, each one bearing the name of some prominent Florentine family, Baroncelli, Medici, Peruzzi, Bardi and others, indicating that as the years passed the Franciscans drew into their order the most influential citizens of the state. The lofty ceiling of the building is composed of huge wooden beams, while the uneven pavement consists of irregular slabs of stone which mark the tombs of the dead, nearly all of whom have been forgotten, for the inscriptions have been worn smooth by the shuffling of countless feet. The prevailing color, or rather atmosphere, is greyish white, for the walls were whitewashed years ago to give more light to the gloomy interior, and to satisfy the barbarous taste of the period.

GIOTTO AT FLORENCE

A feeling of disappointment takes possession of you as you enter the church, it is so big, so barren, so colorless, but this soon disappears, for Santa Croce is rich in treasure and association. Michel Angelo is buried there, his tomb designed by Vasari; close at hand is the cenotaph of Dante, and the tombs of Machiavelli, Rossini, and Leonardo Bruni. Donatello's altar of grey stone with the "Annunciation" is most beautiful, and so is the stone pulpit by Majano with its exquisite Franciscan reliefs.

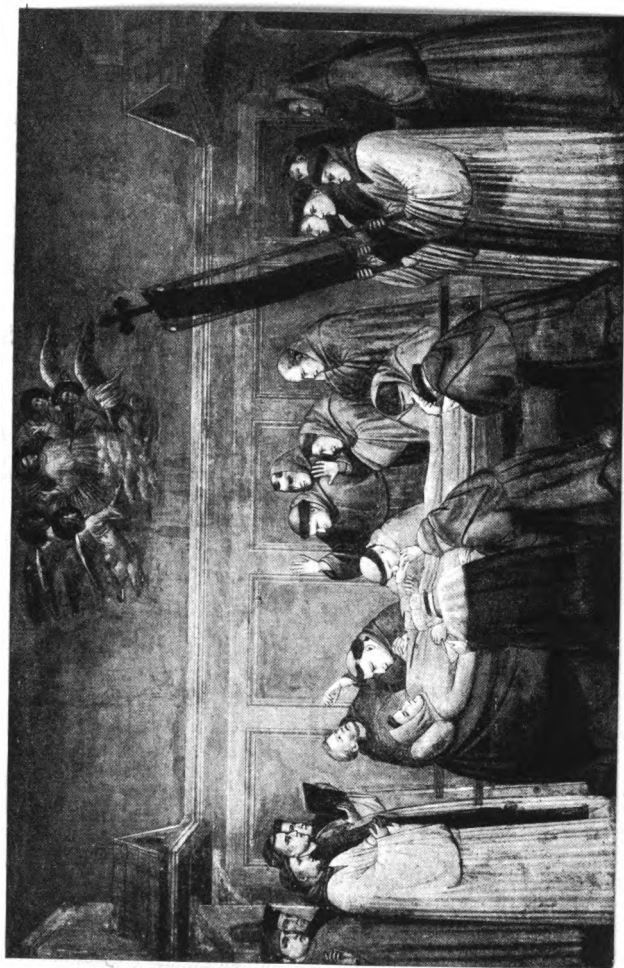
But we have come to Santa Croce to study Giotto, and must hasten on to the chapels, where the rude whitewash has been carefully removed, and the old frescoes, some of Giotto's best, have been brought to light. Vasari insists that Giotto decorated at least four of them. Frescoes have thus far been found in only the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels, although others may be in existence and may some day be discovered, but more authentic information is desired, for the removing of the whitewash is too careful and costly work for mere experimentation. The decoration of the Santa Croce chapels was probably among the last of Giotto's commissions. The year 1330 was about the date, but we search in vain for an accurate sequence of events in Giotto's life. Vasari, with an assurance that is refreshing in its naïveté, sends our artist all over Italy painting vociferously. To Ravenna he goes, invited by Dante, to Rimini, Gaeta, Lucca, Arezzo, Ferrara, Urbino, Verona, and even to faraway Avignon in southern France, where he sojourns for ten years. Surely if this were true some of his paintings in one

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

or more of these cities might have been spared, even by chance.

The frescoes in the Bardi Chapel represent scenes from the life of St. Francis. "St. Francis' Renunciation of his Father"—"St. Francis before Innocent III"—"St. Francis before the Sultan"—"The Apparition at Arles"—"St. Francis receiving the Stigmata"—"Visions of Brother Agostino and the Bishop of Assisi"—"Funeral of St. Francis." It is interesting to compare some of these with the same subjects painted years before in Assisi, and to note the greater skill and perfection. The grouping is much better, there is no crowding of figures, the human body with its drapery has developed into a graceful form, while the freedom of drawing in the architecture is remarkable; nor has the artist lost any of his power of expression.

The greatest picture of the group is the "Funeral of St. Francis," and F. Mason Perkins, an authority on Giotto, writes of it: "Probably in more ways than one, Giotto's greatest masterpiece, as a composition this work remains unsurpassed if not unparalleled in the entire history of Italian art. No words can do the slightest justice to the beauty of this wonderful design, so faultless in its absolute perfection, in a way the culminating effort of the master's genius as an artist, and sufficient in itself to confirm all our claims to the great position held by Giotto, not only as the first painter of his own day, but as one of the greatest of all times." The picture is a study in attitudes and facial expression. The spiritual atmosphere is uplifting, for the look of



FUNERAL OF SAINT FRANCIS—Giotto
Reproduction from a Brogi photograph

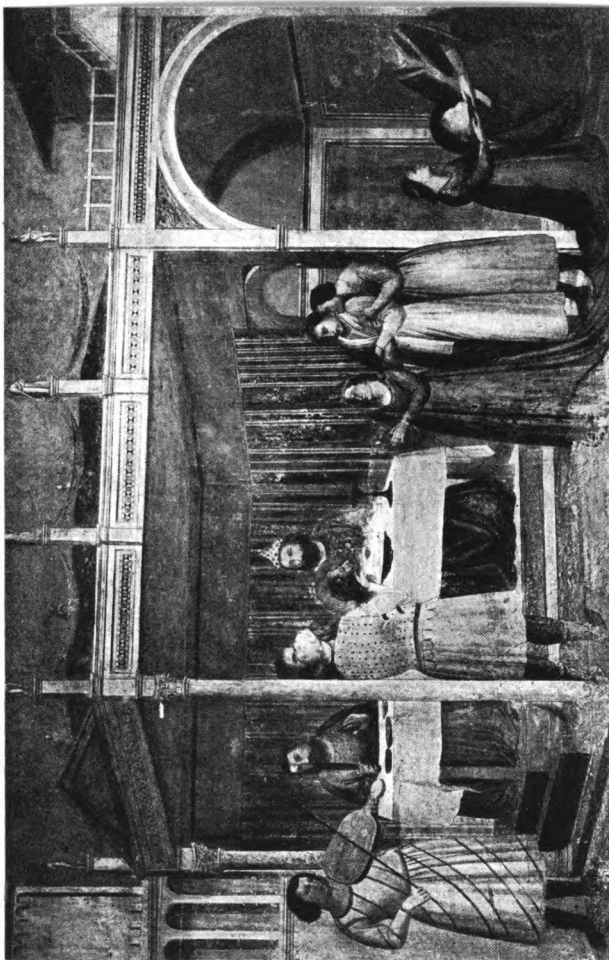
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

peace on the face of the dead saint finds its response in smiles of joy on the lips of his followers, who, either by purpose or by chance, number eleven. We know of no Judas among the twelve disciples of St. Francis, we are, however, shocked to see "doubting Thomas" searching for the stigmata.

On either side of the chapel altar Giotto has painted full length figures of St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Clare, St. Louis King of France, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and on the ceiling, "St. Francis in Glory," and the three virtues of the Franciscan order, Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

In the Peruzzi Chapel there are portrayed scenes from the life of John the Baptist, the "Appearance of the Angel to Zacharias," the "Birth and Naming of St. John," and the "Feast of Herod"; also scenes from the life of John the Evangelist, "Raising of Drusiana," "Vision on the Isle of Patmos," and the "Assumption of St. John." Some of these pictures claim our attention and admiration, particularly the "Naming of St. John," where we are rejoiced to see that Giotto has finally painted a well-formed, attractive baby.

Giotto has made a very solemn painting of the "Feast of Herod." At the right, Salome is seen presenting the head of John the Baptist to the queen mother, while in the main picture a heavily built soldier holds it out to the king. The king's guest at the table turns from the scene, two servants are curiously watching, a musician plays softly on his lute, while Salome, writes Roger Fry, "at the tragic moment stops dancing and makes sad music on her



THE FEAST OF HEROD—Giotto
From a photograph by courtesy of Alinari

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

lyre, to show that she, too, is not wanting in proper sensibility." Giotto, by his interpretation of this scene has completely defeated the purpose of the queen by transforming it from gleeful horror to tragic gloom.

Of all Giotto's frescoes those of Santa Croce have suffered the most at the hand of the restorer, although, to my mind the restorer should be criticised with leniency, because his is a thankless task. The removal of the whitewash created havoc with the pictures and many of them have been almost entirely repainted. Fortunately, some escaped, and have retained much of Giotto's characteristic spirit and beauty.

There has always been a controversy as to whether Giotto decorated the famous Bargello in Florence. The building was damaged by fire in the fourteenth century, rebuilt during an inartistic period, and the walls whitewashed. Not many years ago the walls were scraped, the whitewash removed, and the frescoes uncovered. The paintings are faintly visible, representing incidents from the lives of Mary of Egypt, and Mary Magdalene, the "Inferno," "Christ in Glory," and portraits of Dante, Latini, and Corso Donati. The frescoes give evidence of originality and beauty, but the best critics agree that Giotto did not paint them. They were doubtless painted by one of his followers. There are many, however, who cannot give up the association of the Dante portrait with Giotto's brush.

GIOTTO AT FLORENCE

THE CAMPANILE

Ruskin wrote, "A great architect must be a great sculptor or painter. This is a universal law. No person who is not a great sculptor or painter can be an architect. If he is not a great sculptor or painter, he can only be a builder. The three greatest architects hitherto known in the world were Phidias, Giotto and Michel Angelo."

Let us quote from Giotto's poem on Poverty:

"And to make a good building
One should so provide from the foundation,
That it should stand firm against
Force of wind or any other thing,
So that there is no need to alter it afterwards."

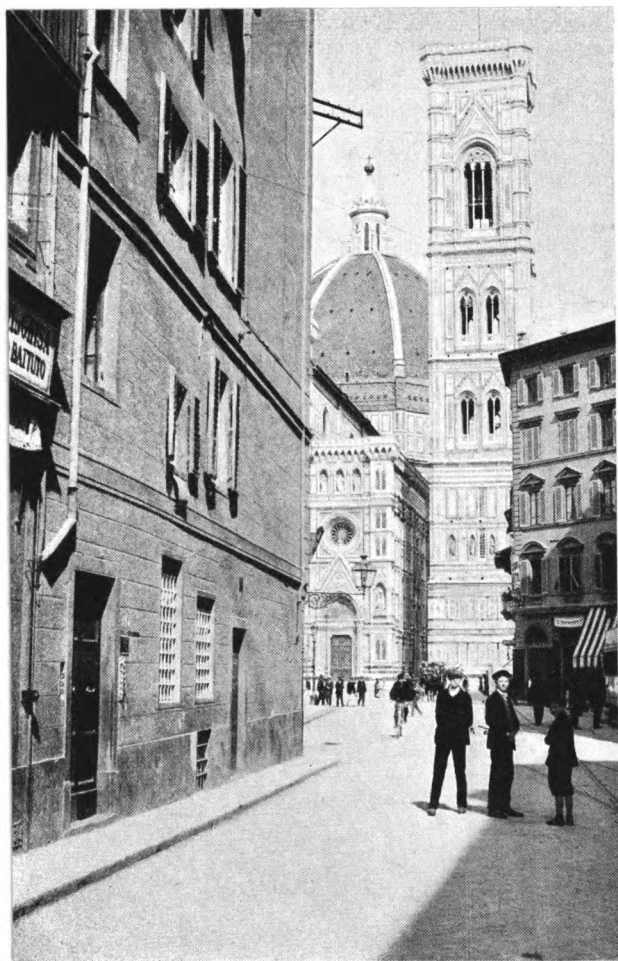
With these words in mind, so replete with architectonic values, let us look upon Giotto's great creation, the Campanile, whose firm foundation has upheld the graceful structure for nearly seven hundred years.

Giotto, like other artists of his day and later periods, was sculptor and architect as well as painter, and if he had never painted a picture, it would have been glory enough to have designed such a monument of grace as the Campanile in Florence. If he had begun earlier in life to turn his talent in this direction, the world would have been poorer in painting, but richer in beautiful structures. He may have designed a few buildings of minor importance, but the only example of his genius remaining is the great bell-tower. Fortunately there is no

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

doubt regarding this commission to Giotto, for an existing document of state contains the following information: "Desiring that the works now in operation and those which it is fitting should be undertaken in the City of Florence on behalf of the Florentine Commune, should proceed honourably and worthily, a thing which it is wholly impossible should rightly be brought to pass, unless some man of experience and renown be set over them and appointed to be master of this kind of works: for as much as it is said that there cannot in the whole world be found one of better avail in these and in many other things than Master Giotto, son of Bondone, painter of Florence, and that he is to be received in his own country as a great master, and to enjoy universal repute in the city aforesaid, so that he may have means to make long sojourn therein; and that from his sojourn many will derive advantage from his knowledge and instruction, and no little glory will accrue to the aforesaid city—to this end it is provided, established and ordained, that the Lords Priors and Standard Bearer of Justice, assisted by the twelve Boni Viri, shall have power, on behalf of the Commune of Florence, to elect and depute the said Master Giotto to be Master and Governor of the building and work of the Church of S. Reparata, and of the erection and completion of the walls of the city of Florence, and of the fortifications of the city itself, and of the other works of the said Commune."

Gentlemen of the Florentine Commune, long dead and turned to dust, we of the twentieth century doff



GIOTTO'S TOWER, FLORENCE

From a photograph by J. R. C.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

our hats to you! Recognizing the virtues and merits of one of your own citizens you bestow great commissions upon him to keep him in your midst, and "verily, you have your reward." You also have taught us a very wholesome lesson.

We can assume that Giotto's reputation was at its highest point at this time or he would not have been selected for so important an undertaking. The Pisans and Sienese had but recently completed their wonderful groups, and the citizens of Florence were anxious to out-do their thrifty neighbors.

The Tower was begun and the foundation stone was laid July 18, 1334, in the presence of the rulers of the city and a great crowd of people. Giotto did not live to see the completion of the building, for he died in 1337. The work was carried on by Andrea Pisano and Francesco Talenti, and it was fortunate that Giotto was succeeded by men of such reputation and genius. His plans were doubtless somewhat modified, for it is believed that it was his idea to crown the structure with a spire, but the changes were few, and posterity has not attempted to rob Giotto of the praise which so justly belongs to him, for it has been and will be known to the world as "Giotto's Tower." When the Cathedral group was completed the Florentines were content, for their duomo was the largest church in Italy, the campanile the most graceful tower, and the great Brunelleschi dome the wonder of architectural achievement.

Some controversy has arisen as to the designer of the bas-reliefs on the first story of the tower. The

GIOTTO AT FLORENCE

best authorities give the honor to Giotto, and we would not deny him the craft of the sculptor, but the hammer and chisel were probably wielded by other hands than his. The reliefs are quite worn away at present, and it is almost impossible to study them in their original setting with any satisfaction. They are twenty-seven in number, representing "the creation of man and his subsequent earthly occupations, commencing with the older and more primitive branches of industry, and ending with the higher arts and sciences."

One is beset by many, many emotions as one walks the streets of the Old World cities. The imagination runs riot, and our fancy is unrestrained. What an inspiration it would be if one could step into St. Peters or Santa Croce once a day, or could just look for a moment on Giotto's Tower as one passed by on one's way to his daily task. Then we sigh, and say alas! for few such visions greet our commercial American eyes, but we can cultivate the inner vision, and make these treasures of the world so real, that our cares may be more lightly borne, and our lives become richer and more harmonious through such companionship.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

[347]

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NOV 7 '67

OCT 7 '68

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